

THE MAHAYANA PATH OF PREPARATION

The following presentation is according to Panchen Sonam Drakpa's *General Meaning* which is a commentary on Gyaltsab je's *Ornament of the Essence*. The *Ornament of the Essence*, in turn, is a commentary on *Clarifying the Meaning*, a short and precise text composed by the eighth century Master Haribhadra and, as mentioned before, considered to be one of the best Indian commentaries on Maitreya's *Ornament*.

However, only some of the passages presented below are literal translations of the *General Meaning*'s exposition on the Mahayana path of preparation, while the remainders are modified and interspersed with additional explanations.

Panchen Sonam Drakpa starts his exposition by citing a conjunctive or introductory passage (Tib.: *mtshams shyor*) that explains why the presentation of the ten types of practice instruction is followed by the presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation:

Having set forth the ten types of Mahayana practice instructions next follows a detailed presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation (the second of the five Mahayana paths).

The reason for presenting the Mahayana path of preparation after having set forth the ten practice instructions is that on the Mahayana path of accumulation practitioners come to a true understanding of emptiness (the lack of intrinsic existence of phenomena) with 'an awareness arisen from hearing' and 'an awareness arisen from contemplation' by relying on the ten practice instructions. 'An awareness arisen from hearing' refers to a correctly assuming consciousness and 'an awareness arisen from contemplation' to an inferential cognizer. A correctly assuming consciousness apprehending emptiness correctly perceives emptiness but does not realize it, while an inferential cognizer apprehending emptiness not only apprehends emptiness correctly but also realizes it.

Hence Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation first cultivate a correctly assuming consciousness apprehending emptiness and thereafter an inferential cognizer realizing emptiness. Both awarenesses are cultivated in reliance on the ten practice instructions.

As a result of these two awarenesses they then cultivate the Mahayana path of preparation that is 'an awareness mainly arisen from meditation' realizing emptiness. 'An awareness mainly arisen from meditation' refers to a *meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight*.

The attainment of the first moment of a meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight, realizing emptiness marks the first moment of the Mahayana path of preparation. (This explanation is from the point of view of Bodhisattvas who entered the Mahayana path from the outset and who did not realize emptiness directly while abiding on the Hinayana path.)

Therefore, since the Mahayana path of accumulation apprehending emptiness is the cause of the Mahayana path of preparation realizing emptiness and since the Mahayana path of accumulation realizing emptiness is generated in reliance on the ten practice instructions the Mahayana path of preparation realizing emptiness is also generated in reliance on the ten practice instructions.

Haribhadra says in his *Clarifying the Meaning*:

Beginners have thus obtained the [Mahayana] practice instructions. Since the elements of definite differentiation (i.e. the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation) come forth, the elements of definite differentiation [will be explained].

Gyaltsab je says in his *Ornament of the Essence*:

Beginners abiding on the [Mahayana] path of accumulation, owing to having thus obtained the [Mahayana] practice instructions, meditate on the meaning of the practice instructions so that the elements of definite differentiation (i.e. the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation) come forth. Therefore, subsequent to [the Mahayana practice instructions] the elements of definite differentiation - the path that is a similitude of generating the path of seeing - will be explained.

After Panchen Sonam Drakpa gives the reason for the presentation of the Mahayana practice instructions being followed by the presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation he cites the following sutric passages which teach the Mahayana path of preparation:

A Bodhisattva, a great heroic being, having not lapsed into the fault of the Bodhisattva's peak level and seeking to fully perfect all such root virtues, trains in the perfection of wisdom.

(and:)

Then the Venerable Shariputra asks the Venerable Subhuti, "Venerable Subhuti, how does one lapse into the fault of the peak of a Bodhisattva, a great heroic being?" Venerable Subhuti replies by saying to the Venerable Shariputra, "Venerable Shariputra, a Bodhisattva, a great heroic being who is not skillful practices the six perfections. Not knowing how to be skillful he relies on the meditative stabilizations of emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness, and even though he does not fall onto the level of Hearers and Solitary Realizers he does not engage in not having the fault of a Bodhisattva. Such is the fault of the peak of a Bodhisattva, a great heroic being."

(and:)

Shariputra says, "Venerable Subhuti, why does one incur the fault of a Bodhisattva, a great heroic being?" Subhuti says, "Venerable Shariputra, when a Bodhisattva, a great heroic being, practices the six perfections, he strongly adheres to [the true existence] of the impermanence of sound, fully abides, knows all...

and so forth.

Here the title 'Venerable' is a translation of the Tibetan term *tshe dang ldan pa* which literally means 'possessing life'. This is the title that is used to address junior monastics and according to Geshe Palden Drakpa (a great master from Drepung Loseling Monastery) means "possessing a meaningful life". 'Not having the fault of a Bodhisattva' (Tib.: *byang chub sems pa'i skyon med pa*) refers to a Bodhisattva realizing emptiness directly. Hence, the fault of the peak of a Bodhisattva refers to a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation who owing to strong grasping onto true existence is unable to realize emptiness directly and thus to proceed to the path of seeing.

The citation of the sutric passages is followed by Panchen Sonam Drakpa quoting the first line of the first two verses of the **Ornament**:

Just as the focus and the aspect...

and so forth.

These two verses set forth the Mahayana path of preparation by way of briefly presenting the five characteristics of (1) *focus*, (2) *aspect*, (3) *cause*, (4) *tutor*, and (5) *mode of association* by which the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation. According to another interpretation, the two verses present a further sixth characteristic by which the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation: the characteristic of the (6) *division*.

Thereafter, Panchen Sonam Drakpa quotes the first line of the next ten verses of the **Ornament**:

The focus, impermanent, and so on,

and so forth. These ten verses set forth the Mahayana path of preparation by way of providing extensive descriptions of the above mentioned five or six characteristics.

The twelve verses together with their meaning will be presented below.

The **General Meaning** elucidates the Mahayana path of preparation by way of six subtopics:

1. The support (of the Mahayana path of preparation)
2. The nature (of the Mahayana path of preparation)
3. The categories (of the Mahayana path of preparation)
4. The process of generating (the Mahayana path of preparation)
5. The meaning of each category (of the Mahayana path of preparation)
6. The type of awareness (that constitutes the Mahayana path of preparation that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness)

But before setting forth the six subtopics, the following explanation may help to develop a general understanding of the Mahayana path of preparation and its four levels:

Etymologically, the path of preparation (Tib.: *sbyor lam*) is a path that serves as a *preparation* for the path of seeing, i.e. for the meditative equipoise *directly* realizing emptiness.

The Mahayana path of preparation consists of four levels, which are attained successively:

- 1) Heat
- 2) Peak
- 3) Forbearance
- 4) Supreme Dharma

As mentioned above, the first moment of 'the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight, *conceptually* realizing emptiness' in the continuum of a Bodhisattva marks the first moment of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Such a union is an awareness that, unlike the inferential cognizer conceptually realizing emptiness, is free from mental distraction and mental sinking. It is a deep, clear, and intense perception, which has overcome *coarse* dualistic appearances. Furthermore, with each of the four levels (heat, peak, etc.) dualistic appearances become increasingly subtle.

Nonetheless, the path of preparation's clear appearance of emptiness is not the same as the clear appearance of emptiness of the path of seeing, since on the path of seeing emptiness is realized directly and non-dualistically, whereas on the path of preparation it is realized by means of a generic image of emptiness.

1) **Heat**

Tibetan: *drod* (= heat, warmth)

The first moment of the **heat** period of the Mahayana path of preparation and the first moment of the Mahayana path of preparation are equivalent.

Regarding the etymology of this level of the path of preparation, the meditative equipoise *directly* realizing emptiness (which is newly attained on the path of seeing) is described as a fire that *burns* or eliminates obstructions. Therefore, when Bodhisattvas reach the 'meditative stabilization, which is a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' they are getting closer to the direct realization of emptiness, which is why the heat level is a sign that practitioners are approaching the fire of the meditative equipoise of the path of seeing.

2) **Peak**

Tibetan: *rtse mo* (= peak/summit/foremost)

Etymologically, this level of the path of preparation is called 'peak' because it exceeds and is superior to the heat level.

3) **Forbearance**

Tibetan: *bzod pa* (= forbearance/endurance/patience)

Regarding the etymology, during this level Bodhisattvas achieve a type of forbearance or endurance that is free from the fear of emptiness.

Also, from the forbearance path of preparation onwards, Bodhisattvas can no longer be reborn in the lower realms (hell-realm, preta realm, and animal realm) through the force of afflictions and contaminated karma – even though once they reach the path of seeing they may still choose to be reborn in those realms in order to benefit sentient beings.

4) **Supreme Dharma**

Tibetan: *chos mchog* (*chos* = Dharma/phenomenon, *mchog* = supreme/utmost/highest)

Etymologically, this level is called supreme Dharma because it is supreme among *mundane* virtues. It is supreme among mundane virtues since it is the highest level of the two mundane paths. The two mundane paths are the path of accumulation and the path of preparation.

The path of accumulation and the path of preparation are mundane paths because Bodhisattvas who entered the Mahayana path from the outset do not *directly* realize emptiness on those two paths. The

attainment of the mind that *directly* realizes emptiness (i.e. the attainment of the path of seeing) marks the first moment of the supermundane or Arya path and of becoming an Arya. From this point onwards, Bodhisattvas will no longer be reborn uncontrollably through the power of afflictions and contaminated karma, but deliberately through the power of compassion and prayer, in order to benefit sentient beings.

Hence the former two paths are mundane paths and the latter three Arya or supermundane paths.

Mundane paths		Arya paths / Supermundane paths		
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Path of accumulation	Path of preparation	Path of seeing	Path of meditation	Path of no-more-learning

The four levels of the path of preparation (heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme Dharma) are the same in conceptually realizing the lack of true existence and in having clear appearance of emptiness. Yet they are not the same regarding the length of time during which the practitioners have familiarized with emptiness. As a result, they also differ with regard to the type of misperception they are able to undermine or weaken. This is explained below.

1. The support (of the Mahayana path of preparation)

Returning to the six subtopics presented in the *General Meaning*, the first of the subtopics, the support, is categorized into two:

- i. The physical support
- ii. The mental support

i. The physical support

The physical support of the Mahayana path of preparation refers to the rebirth in one of the realms a practitioner must abide in to be able to *newly* cultivate each of the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation.

According to Vasubhandu's *Abhidharma-kosha* (which is from the point of view of the Vaibashika and Sautantrika philosophical tenet systems), the physical support of practitioners who newly attain the heat, peak, or forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation is one of the three human states of existence. In general, there are four human states of existence:

1. Humans of the Eastern Continent called 'the Continent of [Those With] Superior/Large Bodies (Skt.: *purvavideha*, Tib.: *shar lus 'phags po*),
2. Humans of the Southern Continent called 'the Continent of the Rose-Apple or *Jambu* Fruit' (Skt.: *jambudvipa*, Tib.: *lho 'dzam bu gling*)
3. Humans of the Western Continent called 'the Continent of Using Cattle' (Skt.: *aparagodaniya*, Tib.: *nub ba blang spyod*)
4. Humans of the Northern Continent called 'the Continent of Unpleasant Sound' (Skt.: *uttarakuru*, Tib.: *byang sgra mi snyan*)

Here the three human states of existence which are the physical support of practitioners who newly attain the heat, peak, or forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation refer to humans of the Eastern, Southern, or Western Continent. Please note that humans of the Southern continent refer to humans born on planet Earth. Therefore, according to the *Abhidharma-kosha*, a Bodhisattva who newly attains the heat, peak, or forbearance level of the path of preparation is necessarily a human being of one of the three levels.

However, there are no Bodhisattvas who newly attain one of the first three levels of the path of preparation as humans of the Northern Continent. The reason for this is that humans of the Northern Continent have great karmic distractions which prevent them from generating the degree of renunciation that is necessary to cultivate any of the three levels.

Bodhisattvas who newly attain the fourth level of supreme Dharma of the path of preparation are either human beings of one of the three human states of existence or celestial beings of the Desire Realm. Why citing the *Abhidharma kosha*?

From the point of view of the Mahayana tenet schools (Chittamatra and Madhyamika tenet systems), Bodhisattvas who newly attain the heat, peak, or forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation are humans of one of the three continents, celestial beings of the Desire Realm, or celestial beings of the Form Realm. Whereas Bodhisattvas who newly attain the supreme Dharma level of the path of preparation are only either humans of the three continents or celestial beings of the Desire Realm. There are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the supreme Dharma level of the path of preparation because there are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing, and because the physical support of the two, the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation and the Mahayana path of seeing is the same. The physical support of the two, the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation and the Mahayana path of seeing is the same, for Vasubhandu says in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (Skt.: *Abhidharma-kosha*, Tib.: *mngon pa mdzod*)

That [the supreme Dharma level] is the same level as the path of seeing

Gyaltsab je says in his *Ornament of the Essence*:

Men and women of the three [human] continents as well as celestial beings of the Desire Realm constitute the physical support [for generating the Mahayana path of preparation]. Even though [beings of the Form Realm are] not the physical support for directly generating the supreme Dharma level, apparently some beings of the Form Realm [newly] generate the heat and peak levels.

ii. *The mental support*

The mental support here refers to the type of meditative absorption with which practitioners newly attain each of the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation. Of the eight absorptions (i.e. the four concentrations and the four formless absorptions) Bodhisattvas newly attain each of the four levels of the path of preparation with one of the four concentrations.

2. *The nature (of the Mahayana path of preparation)*

In general, the 'nature' (Tib.: *ngo bo*) of a phenomenon refers to its meaning or possibly its definition. However, citing the nature of something in the *General Meaning* is often intended to provide students merely with a general idea of the phenomenon it delineates and not with a definition that withstands logical analysis. Definitions that withstand logical analysis are provided in Panchen Sonam Drakpa's *Decisive Analysis* (although here the nature of the Mahayana path of preparation can also serve as its definition).

The nature of the Mahayana path of preparation is:

A mundane Mahayana path that arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the path of concordance of liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation), and that is a similitude of the 'truth clear realization'.

The meaning of the different aspects of the nature is:

- ❖ **A mundane Mahayana path:** It is a Mahayana path because it is a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva. It is a mundane Mahayana path because it is a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who has not yet reached the path of seeing.
- ❖ **It arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the path of concordance of liberation:** The 'path of concordance of liberation' (Tib.: *thar pa cha mthun*) is another name for the path of accumulation. Therefore, the path of partial concordance of liberation and the path of accumulation are equivalent. The Mahayana path of preparation arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the path of partial concordance of liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation), because it cannot arise before the path of concordance of liberation is completed and because it is produced by the path of partial concordance of liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation), and is thus generated subsequent to it.

- ❖ **It is a similitude of the 'truth clear realization':** The 'truth clear realization' is another name for the path of seeing. Hence, the 'truth of clear realization' and the path of seeing are equivalent. The Mahayana path of preparation is similar to the path of seeing, for instance, with regard to its realization of emptiness, for even though it does not realize emptiness directly but it does so with a meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight. Therefore, it is a similitude of the path of seeing, i.e. the 'truth of realization'.

Please note that whatever is a Mahayana path of preparation is not necessarily an awareness arisen from meditation because there are also Mahayana paths of preparation that are awarenesses arisen from hearing and awarenesses arisen from contemplation.

Asanga says in his *Summary of Manifest Knowledge* (Skt. *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, Tib.: *mngon pa kun btus*):

Whatever exists on the [path of] accumulation also exists on the [path of] preparation

Vasubhandu says in his commentary on *Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata* (Skt.: *Dharma Dharmata Vibhanga*, Tib.: *chos nyid rnam 'byed kyi 'brel ba*):

All are thoroughly distinguished by [awarenesses arisen from] hearing, contemplation, and meditation

Gyaltsab je says in the *Ornament of the Essence*:

[The nature of the Mahayana path of preparation is:] a mundane Mahayana path [that arises] subsequent to the completion of a concordance of liberation, and that is a similitude of the direct realization of the truth. [The Mahayana path of preparation] is not limited to solely being wisdoms arisen from meditation, because there are many cases of [Mahayana paths of preparation that are] wisdoms arisen from hearing or contemplation.

3. The categories (of the Mahayana path of preparation)

As mentioned above, the Mahayana path of preparation can be categorized into:

- 1) The heat level of the path of preparation
- 2) The peak level of the path of preparation
- 3) The forbearance level of the path of preparation
- 4) The supreme Dharma level of the path of preparation

This fourfold division is from the point of view of the nature of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Each of the four levels can be further categorized into:

- a) Small
- b) Middling
- c) Great

Hence, there is a small, middling, and great **heat** level of the Mahayana path of preparation, a small, middling, and great **peak** level of the Mahayana path of preparation, and so forth - in total twelve levels.

The threefold subdivision can be interpreted in two ways. Small, middling, and great may refer to practitioners of different mental faculties, with *small heat* referring to Bodhisattvas on the **heat** level of the path of preparation who are of weak mental faculty, *middling heat* to those of middling faculty, and *great heat* to those of sharp faculty. Similarly, *small peak* refers to Bodhisattvas on the **peak** level of the path of preparation who are of weak mental faculty, *middling peak* to those of middling mental faculty, and so forth.

Another possibility is that small, middling, and great refer to the time when they were generated, with *small heat* referring to the level generated in the beginning of the **heat** level, *middling heat* to the level generated in the middle, and *great heat* referring to the level generated at the end.

Panchen Sonam Drakpa asserts only the latter interpretation to be correct. The latter interpretation also corresponds to the scriptures describing this subdivision as being 'a category from the point of view of temporary states'.

Gyalsab je says in his ***Ornament of the Essence***:

The category [from the point of view of] temporary states are the three: small, middling, and great.
The category [from the point of view] of nature are the four: heat, and so forth.

4. The mode of generating (the Mahayana path of preparation)

As mentioned before, the first moment of the Mahayana path of preparation is attained when Bodhisattvas newly generate 'an awareness mainly arisen from meditation' conceptually realizing emptiness. In other words, they attain the first moment of the Mahayana path of preparation when they newly generate the first moment of the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight conceptually realizing emptiness.

However, 'awarenesses mainly arisen from meditation' also arise in the continuums of Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation; they arise in both, the continuums of Bodhisattvas who prior to entering the Mahayana path entered the Hinayana path and became Hinayana Arhats, and in the continuums of Bodhisattvas who prior to entering the Mahayana path did *not* enter the Hinayana path (i.e. Bodhisattvas who entered the Mahayana path from the outset). Yet in the case of Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation who entered the Mahayana path from the outset, 'awarenesses mainly arisen from meditation' take to mind only *conventional truths*. Examples of such awarenesses are meditative stabilizations that are a union of calm abiding and special insight perceiving the suffering nature of the contaminated aggregates, impermanence, unpleasantness, and so forth. The meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight apprehending emptiness (i.e. the ultimate truth) does not manifest in their continuums.

Gyalsab je says in the ***Ornament of the Essence***:

Although on the path of accumulation a fully qualified training in complete aspects that thoroughly practices the aspects of the three knowers, a wisdom arisen from meditation that focuses on impermanence and suffering, and a wisdom arisen from meditation that meditates on unpleasantness, and so forth manifest, a wisdom [mainly] arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness does not manifest because when that [wisdom mainly arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness] is for the first time generated [Bodhisattvas who entered the Mahayana path from the outset] progress to the path of preparation.

Please note that there are three types of awareness:

- (a) An awareness arisen from hearing (Tib.: *thos byung gi blo*)
- (b) An awareness arisen from contemplation (Tib.: *bsam byung gi blo*)
- (c) An awareness arisen from meditation (Tib.: *bsgoms byung gi blo*)

'An awareness arisen from hearing' refers to a correctly assuming consciousness, 'an awareness arisen from contemplation' to an inferential cognizer, and 'an awareness arisen from meditation' to either an awareness that is concomitant with the mental factor of calm abiding or to the mental factor of calm abiding itself.

Similarly, there are three types of wisdom:

- (a) A wisdom arisen from hearing (Tib.: *thos byung gi shes rab*)
- (b) A wisdom arisen from contemplation (Tib.: *bsam byung gi shes rab*)
- (c) A wisdom arisen from meditation (Tib.: *bsgoms byung gi shes rab*)

'A wisdom arisen from hearing' refers to the mental factor of wisdom that is a correctly assuming consciousness, 'a wisdom arisen from contemplation' to the mental factor of wisdom that is an inferential cognizer, and 'a wisdom arisen from meditation' to the mental factor of wisdom that is concomitant with calm abiding. Therefore, there is a difference between 'an awareness arisen from hearing' and 'a wisdom arisen from hearing'. 'A wisdom arisen from hearing' constitutes a mental factor that is both, 'an awareness arisen from hearing' *and* the mental factor of wisdom. For instance, the mental factor of feeling that is concomitant with 'a wisdom arisen from hearing' is *an awareness* arisen from hearing but not 'a *wisdom* arisen from hearing'.

Also, there is a difference between 'an awareness arisen from contemplation' and 'a wisdom arisen from contemplation'; 'a wisdom arisen from contemplation' constitutes a mental factor that is both, 'an awareness arisen from contemplation' *and* the mental factor of wisdom.

Likewise, there is a difference between '*an awareness* arisen from meditation' and '*a wisdom* arisen from meditation' because '*a wisdom* arisen from meditation' constitutes a mental factor that is both, an awareness arisen from meditation and the mental factor of wisdom.

Additionally, the scriptures mention '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' which is different from '*an awareness* arisen from meditation'. '*An awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' refers to an awareness that is the union of calm abiding and special insight. However it is not listed as a fourth type of awareness, for it is an instance of and thus *subsumed* under '*an awareness* arisen from meditation'. It is an instance of '*an awareness* arisen from meditation' because whatever is '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' is necessarily '*an awareness* arisen from meditation'.

However, whatever is '*an awareness* arisen from meditation' is not necessarily '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation'. An example of '*an awareness* arisen from meditation' that is not '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' is the mental factor of calm abiding in the continuum of a practitioner who has not yet cultivated the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight. Therefore, the cultivation of '*an awareness* arisen from meditation' precedes the cultivation of '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation', for (as is explained below) the cultivation of calm abiding must precede the cultivation of the union of calm abiding and special insight.

Also, as before, there is difference between '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' and '*a wisdom mainly* arisen from meditation', for '*an awareness mainly* arisen from meditation' refers to any awareness that is a union of calm abiding and special insight while '*a wisdom mainly* arisen from meditation' refers to the mental factor of wisdom that is a union of calm abiding and special insight.

An awareness arisen from hearing	→ a correctly assuming consciousness
An awareness arisen from contemplation	→ an inferential cognizer
An awareness arisen from meditation	→ an awareness that is concomitant with the mental factor of calm abiding, or the mental factor of calm abiding itself
An awareness <i>mainly</i> arisen from meditation	→ an awareness that is a union of calm abiding and special insight

Wisdom arisen from hearing	→ the mental factor of wisdom that is a correctly assuming consciousness
Wisdom arisen from contemplation	→ the mental factor of wisdom that is an inferential cognizer
Wisdom arisen from meditation	→ the mental factor of wisdom that is concomitant with the mental factor of calm abiding
Wisdom <i>mainly</i> arisen from meditation	→ the mental factor of wisdom that is a union of calm abiding and special insight

With regard to the three types of wisdom focusing on emptiness, 'the wisdom arisen from hearing that focuses on emptiness' refers to: the mental factor of wisdom that is a correctly assuming consciousness apprehending emptiness. 'The wisdom arisen from contemplation that focuses on emptiness' refers to: the mental factor of wisdom that is an inferential cognizer realizing emptiness. And 'the wisdom arisen

from meditation that focuses on emptiness' refers to: the mental factor of wisdom that is concomitant with calm abiding realizing emptiness.

Also, 'the wisdom *mainly* arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness' refers to the mental factor of wisdom that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness.

In order to fully comprehend the process of newly cultivating the 'the wisdom mainly arisen from meditation focusing on emptiness' and therefore the Mahayana path of preparation that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness, it may be helpful to give the following explanation. (Please note that this explanation is from the point of view of Bodhisattvas who entered the Mahayana path from the outset):

On the path of accumulation Bodhisattvas first cultivate the wisdom arisen from hearing that focuses on emptiness, i.e. a correctly assuming consciousness apprehending emptiness. Such cultivation is followed by developing the wisdom arisen from contemplation that focuses on emptiness, i.e. an inferential cognizer realizing emptiness (unless they cultivated those two types of awareness before they entered the path of accumulation). If they do not realize emptiness with an inferential cognizer *at the latest* on the path of accumulation they cannot move on to the next level. Mahayana practitioners attain such inferential realization of emptiness by reflecting on the various reasons that establish the lack of inherent/intrinsic existence.

Additionally, on the path of accumulation Bodhisattvas also cultivate a special meditative stabilization that is called 'a union of calm abiding and special insight', (unless they already cultivated such stabilization before they entered the path of accumulation). In order to *newly* cultivate this union practitioners take as the object of meditation a phenomenon that is not difficult to focus on, such as the image of the Buddha, for at this stage, practitioners would be unable to focus on a subtle phenomenon such as emptiness, subtle impermanence, and so forth while cultivating this meditative stabilization.

In turn, the attainment of such a union must be preceded by developing calm abiding. Etymologically, calm abiding refers to a mental stabilization *abiding* single-pointedly on an object, following the *calming* of distractions.

For the development of the mental stabilization of calm abiding, practitioners choose an object of focus that leads neither to excitement nor to mental laxity, such as the image of a Buddha or the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. By single-pointedly focusing on that object they progress through nine stages: (1) setting the mind, (2) continuous setting, (3) resetting, (4) close setting (5) disciplining, (6) pacifying, (7) thorough pacifying, (8) making one-pointed, and (9) setting in equipoise.

When meditators have reached the ninth state (*setting in equipoise*), they are able to focus effortlessly on an internal or imagined object without mental laxity or excitement for at least four hours.

However, this is not yet sufficient, because calm abiding is only attained when the ninth state is conjoined with physical and mental pliancy. Hence, practitioners continue with their single-pointed meditation until they first achieve mental pliancy. Such pliancy makes the mind serviceable by pacifying the detrimental states that cause the awareness to be heavy and inflexible, and prevent it from engaging in virtue at will. Thereafter, they achieve physical pliancy which makes the body serviceable and is a pacification of physical heaviness and inflexibility.

The attainment of calm abiding marks the attainment of 'the wisdom arisen from meditation', for calm abiding is concomitant with the mental factor of wisdom that is arisen from meditation.

After attaining calm abiding practitioners develop the union of calm abiding (meditative stabilization) and special insight (meditative analysis), so that special insight is generated based on or conjoined with calm abiding.

In order to develop such union, practitioners initially harmonize calm abiding and analytical meditation by alternating from one to the other, since too much concentration would disrupt the process of analysis, while too much analysis would reduce the factor of stability.

If during the cultivation of calm-abiding a practitioner focused, for instance, on the image of the Buddha, he now also focuses on the image of the Buddha as the object of the analytical meditation, analyzing the image's features, height, color, and so forth.

When, through introspection, practitioners notice during the analytical meditation that excitement is about to arise, they shift to meditative stabilization (calm abiding), alternating back to analysis when the mind has stabilized.

Through this process of repeatedly alternating between analytical and stabilizing meditation, meditators are eventually able to combine the mental factor of calm abiding with the mental factor of analytical wisdom. This means that calm-abiding and the analytical wisdom now operate in parallel at the same time, with equal power, one assisting the other. They have become concomitant mental factors, perceive the same object, and arise and cease at the same time. When analytical wisdom further induces a special mental and physical pliancy, imparting special stability and clarity to the analytical mind, practitioners attain 'a meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight' conceptually realizing the image of a Buddha. This enables them to gain a deep, clear, and intense perception, free from mental distraction and mental sinking.

The attainment of the mental stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight marks the attainment of the 'wisdom *mainly* arisen from meditation'. Please note that the 'mental stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight' constitutes the mental factor of calm abiding and 'the wisdom mainly arisen from meditation' the mental factor of special insight that is concomitant with the mental factor of calm abiding.

After the cultivation of this union practitioners then - instead of taking to mind the image of a Buddha - focus on emptiness. Through continuous familiarity they first cultivate calm abiding conceptually realizing emptiness (which marks the attainment of 'the wisdom arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness') and eventually the meditative stabilization that is a union of calm abiding and special insight conceptually realizing emptiness. The first moment of such a union conceptually realizing emptiness is attained when, while being absorbed in calm abiding, the bliss of mental and physical pliancy is induced by the power of analyzing emptiness with the mental factor of special insight. That moment also marks the first moment of 'the wisdom *mainly* arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness' and therefore of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Mahayana path of accumulation	Mahayana path of preparation
<p>Wisdom arisen from hearing focusing on emptiness</p> <p>Wisdom arisen from contemplation focusing on emptiness</p> <p>Wisdom arisen from meditation focusing e.g. on the image of a Buddha</p> <p>Wisdom mainly arisen from meditation focusing e.g. on the image of a Buddha</p> <p>Wisdom arisen from meditation focusing on emptiness</p>	<p>Wisdom mainly arisen from meditation focusing on emptiness</p>

Now one may wonder what the difference is between the three, (1) the wisdom arisen from hearing that focuses on emptiness, (2) the wisdom arisen from contemplation that focuses on emptiness, and (3) the wisdom mainly arisen from meditation that focuses on emptiness, *with regard to dualistic appearance*. The difference is that in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of accumulation, who entered the Mahayana path from the outset, the two, (1) the wisdom arisen from hearing and (2) the wisdom arisen from contemplation perceive emptiness conjoined with coarse dualistic appearance of the object emptiness and the object-possessor, the wisdom itself. This means that to these consciousnesses the object emptiness and the wisdom appear as if unrelated and distant from one another. On the other hand, (3) the wisdom mainly arisen from meditation conceptually realizes emptiness conjoined with only subtle dualistic appearance [of object and object-possessor], having overcome the coarse dualistic appearance that characterizes the former two types of awareness. However, since the

awareness arisen from meditation on the Mahayana path of preparation still possesses subtle dualistic appearance, emptiness and the wisdom arisen from meditation are merely on the brink of appearing like water being poured into water.

It is only when one reaches the Mahayana path of seeing and realizes emptiness directly and non-conceptually that one overcomes even the subtlest dualistic appearance of the object emptiness and the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness. At that time emptiness and the meditative equipoise appear like water being poured into water.

Gyalsab je says in his ***Ornament of the Essence***:

If someone asks, "what is the difference between the three types of wisdom focusing on emptiness?" [The reply is:] when a wisdom arisen from hearing or contemplation focuses on emptiness - [with emptiness being] a mere negation of elaborations of true existence - even though the [meaning] generality of the object [emptiness] appears well, owing to very coarse dualistic appearance of the object [emptiness] and the object-possessor [the wisdom], [object and object-possessor] appear as though unrelated.

However, when a wisdom [mainly] arisen from meditation focuses on [emptiness], although there is dualistic appearance, having overcome the coarse dualistic appearance of the former two [types of wisdom], it seems as if one has penetrated the object [emptiness]. Also, owing to [emptiness and the wisdom mainly arisen from meditation] being on the brink of appearing like water being poured into water, the meaning-generality [of emptiness] appears in such a manner that it is said that 'dharmata [i.e. emptiness] appears clearly'. However, [that type of clear appearance] is not the clear appearance that is free from conceptuality.

Furthermore, when one is able to induce the bliss of mental and physical pliancy through the power of correctly analyzing the meaning of emptiness, while being absorbed in calm abiding, one attains the fully qualified special insight that focuses on emptiness, and hence one is said 'to attain the union of [calm abiding and special insight]'. Yet one should know that a mere union of calm abiding and special insight [which does not realize emptiness] also manifests on the path of accumulation and [in the mental continuums] of some non-Buddhists.

Corresponding to the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation (heat, peak, etc.), there are also four types of meditative stabilizations that are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness. They also slightly differ in the strength of the subtle dualistic appearance. Even though the meditative stabilizations that are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness of the heat and peak levels have overcome coarse dualistic appearance, Bodhisattvas on these two levels can still discern subtle dualistic appearance.

However, once practitioners reach the forbearance level of the path of preparation they can no longer discern such subtle dualistic appearance.

Asanga says in his ***Shravaka-bhumi***:

It seems as though dualistic appearance subsided but it did not subside.

Gyalsab je says in the ***Ornament of the Essence***:

When one initially generates such a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness, one is said to have 'generated the heat level of the path of preparation'.

At that time, while absorbed [in the realization of emptiness] one is able to ascertain dualistic appearance through the force of one's experience. However, since one is not able to ascertain such [dualistic appearance] when one attains the forbearance level, and so forth, [Asanga] says in the ***Shravaka-bhumi***, "it seems as though dualistic appearance has subsided but it did not subside".

5. The meaning of the individual categories (of the Mahayana path of preparation)

The meaning of the individual categories (i.e. of the four levels of heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme Dharma) is set forth by way of describing the difference between the four levels.

- Someone asserts that the four levels differ with respect to the strength of the clear appearance of emptiness. This means that even though emptiness clearly appears to the four levels' awarenesses arisen from meditation that realize emptiness, that clear appearance enhances on each level.

Therefore, on the **heat** level the clear appearance of the emptiness of the objects of perception is weak, (2) on the **peak** level the clear appearance of the emptiness of objects of perception is middling, (3) on the **forbearance** level the clear appearance of the emptiness of objects of perception is great, and (4) on the **supreme Dharma** level the clear appearance of the emptiness of perceivers is complete.

According to our own system this is not correct because each of the four levels' awarenesses that are single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness are the same with regard to being absorbed into the lack of true existence of both objects of perception and perceivers, and with regard to having clear appearance of the meaning-generality of emptiness and thus of emptiness itself. In other words, the four levels are the same in conceptually realizing the emptiness of phenomena and in having clear appearance of emptiness.

Gyalsab je says in the *Ornament of the Essence*:

It is very difficult to differentiate between the four levels of the path of preparation by way of [positing] them to have weak, middling, and great clear appearance of the lack of inherent existence of objects of perception, and having complete clear appearance of the lack of inherent existence of perceivers [respectively]. The reason is that at the time of absorption [into emptiness, the four levels] do not differ with regard to simultaneously withdrawing objects of perception and perceivers, being absorbed into the lack of inherent existence, and having clear appearance of the meaning-generality of emptiness.

Our own system asserts the difference between the four levels to be from the point of view of the capacity to eliminate obstructions.

However, this does not mean that Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation are able to irreversibly eliminate any of the afflictive or cognitive obstructions yet, for they are able to do so only once they directly realize emptiness, i.e. once they attain the Mahayana path of seeing. Instead, it means that the four levels differ with regard to the type of misperception they are able to undermine (or weaken) as a result of their difference in familiarity with emptiness.

Maitreya says in his *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* (Skt.: *Mahayanasutraalamkara*, Tib.: *mdo sde rgyan*):

At that time, the distractions of objects of perception will be eliminated

(and:)

In this way, subsequent to that, the distractions to the perceiver will be eliminated.

The meaning of these two quotes is that on the two levels of **heat** and **peak** Bodhisattvas' capacity to eliminate manifest intellectually acquired awarenesses grasping at the true existence of objects of perception increases. Then while they are absorbed in the realization of emptiness on the **forbearance** level of the path of preparation Bodhisattvas are able to decrease the coarse strength of manifest innate awarenesses grasping at the true existence of objects of perception. During the subsequent attainment period of the **forbearance** level (after having arisen from the absorption into emptiness) they are able to understand objects of perception to be unreal like a magician's illusion. Thereafter, on the **supreme Dharma** level through the power of familiarity, they are also able to understand perceivers to be unreal like a magician's illusion.

The reason for this sequence is that there are differences between awarenesses adhering to truly existent *objects of perception* and awarenesses adhering to truly existent *perceivers* in terms of how easy or difficult it is to eliminate them. This is explained in detail below.

Gyalsab je also says in the *Ornament of the Essence*:

Therefore, at the time of the first two levels [**heat** and **peak**] the capacity to eliminate [awarenesses] grasping at the true existence of objects of perception becomes more and more outstanding. When the forbearance level of the path of preparation is generated [- while being absorbed in the realization of emptiness-] the coarse strength of manifest innate [awarenesses] grasping at the true existence of objects of perception also decreases. After having arisen from the absorption into emptiness, the generality of objects of perception appearing like a reflection in a mirror appears well.

When the **supreme Dharma** level is generated, perceivers also appear that way through the power of familiarity. Such sequence unfolds because of how easy or difficult it is to eliminate [awarenesses] adhering to truly existent objects of perception and [awarenesses adhering to truly existent] perceivers. [Maitreya] says in the ***Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras*** (Skt.: ***Mahayanasutraalamkara***, Tib.: ***mdo sde rgyan***), "At that time, the distractions of objects of perception will be eliminated," and "In this way, subsequent to that, the distractions to the perceiver will be eliminated." Hence, the four levels of the path of preparation differ on account of eliminating [obstructions]. The claim that, "[the four levels differ] on account of having or not having clear appearance of exalted wisdom" is a claim that is clearly bereft of anything to say.

6. The type of awareness (that constitutes the path of preparation that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness)

This section examines the type of awareness that constitutes a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset.

- Someone asserts that a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is non-conceptual with regard to emptiness, i.e. it directly realizes emptiness.

The response from our own system to this assertion is that it is not correct because from the perspective of a mundane person emptiness is a hidden phenomenon and therefore a mundane person is not able to realize emptiness directly. A Bodhisattva on the path of preparation who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a mundane person, for he has not yet entered the supermundane Mahayana path of seeing.

Also, if the Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset were non-conceptual with regard to emptiness, the following question would arise: is that mind a mistaken awareness with regard to emptiness or a non-mistaken awareness?

If one were to say that it is a mistaken awareness with regard to emptiness then it would follow that it does not realize emptiness because it is a non-conceptual *wrong* consciousness. It would follow that it is a non-conceptual wrong consciousness because it would be a mind that is both non-conceptual and mistaken with regard to emptiness.

Please note that there is a difference between a *mistaken* consciousness and a *wrong* consciousness. A mistaken consciousness is an awareness that is mistaken with respect to its appearing object whereas a wrong consciousness is an awareness that is mistaken with respect to its object of engagement. Therefore, whatever is a mistaken consciousness is not necessarily a wrong consciousness.

For instance, all conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken awarenesses. Yet they are not necessarily wrong consciousnesses. A conceptual consciousness apprehending a car, for example, is not a wrong consciousness because it is not mistaken with respect to its object of engagement, the car. It is not mistaken with respect to its object of engagement because its object of engagement, the car, exists. However, the conceptual consciousness apprehending the car is mistaken because it is mistaken with respect to its appearing object. It is mistaken with respect to its appearing object because conceptual consciousnesses can apprehend the car only by way of the appearance of the generic image (meaning generality) of the car, and because that generic image of the car appears to be the actual car while it is not the actual car. The generic image is not the actual car because it is merely a subjective representation of the car in that it encompasses what we *mean* when we say "car"; it serves as an intermediary object that allows the conceptual consciousness to get at the car.

Therefore, even though the generic image of the car is not the actual car, since to a conceptual consciousness apprehending the car the generic image of the car appears to *be* the actual car, the conceptual consciousness is a mistaken awareness.

But according to the Madhyamika Prasangika system not only conceptual consciousnesses, *all* ordinary awarenesses are mistaken. They are mistaken because their objects appear to exist truly/intrinsically (while of course it is impossible for them to exist that way). Hence, an eye consciousness apprehending a

sunset, for instance, is a mistaken consciousness because it is mistaken with respect to its appearing object. It is mistaken with respect to its appearing object because the sunset appears to exist truly/intrinsically. However, it is not a wrong consciousness since its object of engagement, the sunset, exists.

Therefore, even though our ordinary awarenesses can correctly perceive the different phenomena of the world around us they are nonetheless mistaken with respect to the ultimate nature of these phenomena, their lack of true existence.

The only non-mistaken awareness in the continuum of sentient beings is the awareness that directly realizes emptiness, i.e. the yogic direct perceiver that realizes the lack of true existence of all phenomena. It is not mistaken with regard to the appearance of the generic image of emptiness because it realizes emptiness *directly* without having to rely on the appearance of a generic image of emptiness. Also, it is not mistaken with regard to the appearance of true existence because all phenomena appear to it to be *empty* of true existence.

However, if the Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset were non-conceptual *and* mistaken, it could only be mistaken with regard to emptiness. It could only be mistaken with regard to emptiness because as a direct perceiver realizing emptiness it can neither be mistaken with regard to the appearance of a generic image nor with regard to the appearance of true existence.

In case it were mistaken with regard to emptiness, it would be mistaken with regard to its object of engagement and thus be a wrong consciousness.

If in response to the above mentioned question (- whether the Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a mistaken awareness with regard to emptiness or a non-mistaken awareness -) one were to say that it is a non-mistaken awareness, then it would absurdly follow that it is an awareness that is a direct antidote to the objects of elimination of the path of seeing and irreversibly eliminates these objects of elimination because it is a non-conceptual and non-mistaken awareness with regard to emptiness (and because these objects of elimination have not yet been previously eliminated). However, it is not such a direct antidote, because it is not a path of seeing but a path of preparation.

Gyalsab je says in the ***Ornament of the Essence***:

It is not reasonable to assert this path of preparation absorbed [into emptiness] to be a non-conceptual [consciousness] with regard to emptiness, which apprehends a sound [-generality] and a meaning [-generality] as suitable to be mixed because (i) for a mundane person emptiness is hidden and because (ii) such a non-conceptual consciousness cannot possibly comprehend a hidden [phenomenon].

If it were mistaken with regard to dharmata it would not be correct [to assert] that it clears away manifest superimpositions because it would be a non-conceptual wrong consciousness. If it were non-mistaken it follows that even the seeds of the object of elimination of the path of seeing would be eliminated [by it], because it would be an awareness that is free from conceptuality and non-mistaken with regard to dharmata.

- Someone asserts that a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is an inferential cognizer that is the result of reflecting on correct reasons such as:

"The subject sprout is empty of being truly existent because it is empty of being truly existent one and truly existent many."

According to our own system, asserting such means that one does not understand the difference between the three types of wisdom (wisdom arisen from hearing, wisdom arisen from contemplation, and wisdom arisen from meditation). This is because whatever is an inferential cognizer is necessarily an awareness arisen from contemplation whereas a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is an awareness arisen from meditation.

Gyalsab je says in his ***Ornament of the Essence***:

Someone who does not know the difference between the three [types of] wisdom asserts that [that type of path of preparation] is an inferential cognizer that relies on the 'free-from-one-and-many-reason'.

Therefore, our own system asserts that a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a subsequent cognizer. It is a subsequent cognizer because it is a conceptual knower that realizes emptiness through the power of having previously realized emptiness (with an inferential cognizer).

Gyalsab je says in his ***Ornament of the Essence***:

Therefore, such an absorbed path of preparation, having become a wisdom arisen from meditation through the power of having familiarized with the continuum of a subsequent cognizer, it is of the nature of analysis to which the meaning generality of emptiness clearly appears.

- Someone asserts that emptiness does not appear clearly to a Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset because such a path of preparation is a conceptual consciousness. This is a correct reason because whatever is a conceptual consciousness cannot have clear appearance of emptiness, for Dharmakirti says in his ***Pramanavartika***:

[To an awareness that] depends on a conceptual consciousness

The meaning does not appear clearly.

According to our own system, this is not the meaning of the quote from the ***Pramanavartika*** because it is explained in the ***Ornament of the Essence*** that to that type of Mahayana path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness both emptiness and the generic image of emptiness appear clearly. If they both appear clearly they necessarily both appear clearly as if mixed into one. Hence, the meaning of the quote from the ***Pramanavartika*** is that emptiness does not appear as clearly to a conceptual mind apprehending emptiness as it does to a non-conceptual mind apprehending emptiness.

An auxiliary presentation of conceptions of true existence

Having set forth the six subtopics of the Mahayana path of preparation next follows an auxiliary presentation of conceptions of true existence that are explicitly indicated during the ***Ornament's*** presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation. These conceptions can be categorized into two types of conceptions which in turn can be further categorized into four types.

It is essential to understand these four types of conceptions since they are consecutively undermined by the meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness on the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation. As mentioned above, the difference between the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation is from the point of view of the capacity to eliminate obstructions. This means that the four levels (i.e. their meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness) differ with regard to which of the four types of misconception they are able to undermine (or weaken) as a result of their familiarity with meditating on emptiness.

Conceptions of true existence refer to conceptual consciousnesses that misperceive true existence. The conceptions of true existence that are explicitly indicated during the ***Ornament's*** presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation can be categorized into:

1. Conceptions of objects of perception (Tib.: *gzung rtog*)
2. Conceptions of perceivers (Tib.: *'dzin rtog*)

These two types of conceptions are the same in adhering to true/inherent existence but they differ with regard to the bases of their misperception, i.e. the phenomena which they perceive to exist truly/inherently.

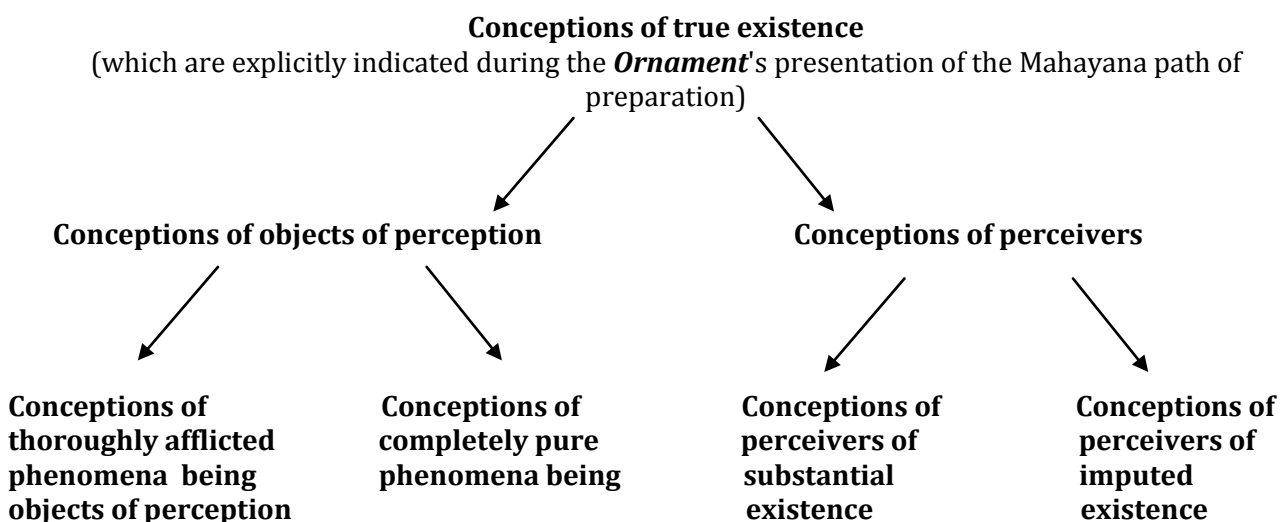
'Conceptions of objects of perception' apprehend truly existent objects of experience and 'conceptions of perceivers' apprehend truly existent experiencers. Please note that here 'perceivers' and 'experiencers' have the same meaning; they both refer either to awarenesses or to living beings, while 'objects of perception' or 'objects of experience' both refer to the *objects* of awarenesses or living beings. Therefore, the bases of misperception (i.e. the phenomena they perceive to exist truly/inherently) of 'conceptions of objects of perceptions' are objects of experience and the bases of misperception of 'conception of perceivers' are experiencers.

Furthermore, conceptions of objects of perception can be categorized into: (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of pure phenomena being objects of perception.

Likewise, conceptions of perceivers can be categorized into (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence.

Thus, the four types of conceptions are:

1. Conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception (Tib.: *kun nas nyon mongs gzung rtog*). They refer to conceptual consciousnesses which focus on thoroughly afflicted phenomena and apprehend them to be truly existent objects of experience (Tib.: *kun nas nyon mongs phyogs kyi bden pa la dmigs nas longs spyad byar bden par 'dzin pa'i zhen rig*)
2. Conceptions of pure phenomena being objects of perception. (Tib.: *rnam byang gzung rtog*) They refer to conceptual consciousnesses which focus on completely pure phenomena and apprehend them to be truly existent objects of experience (Tib.: *rnam byang phyogs kyi bden pa longs spyad byar bden par 'dzin pa'i zhen rig*)
3. Conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence (Tib.: *rdzas 'dzin rtog pa*) They refer to conceptual consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of substantial existence and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers (Tib.: *rdas 'dzin la dmigs nas longs spyod byed du bden par 'dzin pa'i zhen rig*)
4. Conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence (Tib.: *btags 'dzin rtog pa*). They refer to conceptual consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of imputed existence and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers (Tib.: *btags 'dzin la dmigs nas longs spyod byed du bden par 'dzin pa'i zhen rig*)



As before, even though the four types of misconceptions are the same in apprehending true/intrinsic existence they differ with regard to the bases of their misperception, i.e. the phenomena which they perceive to exist truly/intrinsically.

This means that the first two types of misconceptions not only apprehend truly existent objects of experience while the latter two types truly existent experiencers. Instead, the first type apprehend thoroughly afflicted phenomena to be truly existent objects of experience, the second type apprehend

completely pure phenomena to be truly existent object of experience, the third type apprehend perceivers of substantial existence to be truly existent experiencers while the fourth type apprehend perceivers of imputed existence to be truly existent experiencers.

Therefore, the bases of the first type of misconceptions are: thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of experience.

The bases of the second type of misconceptions are: completely pure phenomena being objects of experience.

The bases of the third misconception are: perceivers of substantial existence being experiencers.

And the bases of the fourth misconception are: perceivers of imputed existence being experiencers.

From the point of view of the Madhyamika Prasangika, the four types of misconceptions are afflictive obstructions which Bodhisattvas irreversibly eliminate while they progress through the first eight Bodhisattva bhumis/grounds (with the Mahayana path of seeing constituting the first bhumi).

Even though on the Mahayana path of preparation the 'meditative stabilizations, which are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' are unable to *eliminate* the four types of misconceptions, they are able to *undermine* them. The undermining of those conceptions in turn enables their complete removal by the yogic direct perceivers realizing emptiness on the path of seeing and the path of meditation.

Furthermore, out of the four types of misconceptions, the first is easier to undermine than the second, the second is easier to undermine than the third, and so forth.

Hence, the 'meditative stabilizations which are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' on the **heat** level of the path of preparation are able to undermine the first type of misconceptions but not the second, third, and fourth. The 'meditative stabilizations which are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' on the **peak** level are able to undermine the second type but not the third and fourth. The 'meditative stabilizations which are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' on the **forbearance** level are able to undermine the third type but not the fourth. And the 'meditative stabilization which are a union of calm abiding and special insight, conceptually realizing emptiness' on the **supreme Dharma** level are able to undermine the fourth.

The reason for these different abilities is that the four levels differ regarding the familiarity with emptiness - on the heat level Bodhisattvas are less familiar with emptiness than on the peak level, on the peak level less familiar than on the forbearance level, etc.; their familiarity with emptiness enhancing on each level.

Moreover, the reason for the first type of misconceptions being easier to undermine than the second, the second easier to undermine than the third, etc. is as follows:

As mentioned above, the first two types of misconceptions apprehend the true existence of objects of experience, whereas the latter two apprehend the true existence of experiencers. In this context, experiencers mainly refer to awarenesses or living beings, and objects of experience to the objects of these awarenesses or living beings.

Since it is easier to understand objects of experience than to understand the experiencers, i.e. the awarenesses/living beings, themselves, it is also easier to realize the *lack true existence* of objects of experience than to realize the *lack of true existence* of the experiencers or awarenesses/living beings themselves. Therefore, it is also easier to undermine misconceptions apprehending objects of experience to be truly existent (the two former types of misconceptions) than to undermine conceptions apprehending the true existence of experiencers (the two latter types of misconceptions).

Similarly, it is easier to realize that thoroughly afflicted phenomena are *empty* of being truly existent objects of experience than to realize that completely pure phenomena are *empty* of being truly existent objects of experience. Examples of thoroughly afflicted phenomena are the five aggregates of an ordinary person. They are thoroughly afflicted because they are the result of afflictions and contaminated karma. Examples of completely pure phenomena are the five aggregates of a Buddha, which are free from all faults and impurities. Since practitioners consider the five aggregates of an ordinary person to be phenomena that need to be overcome and the five aggregates of a Buddha phenomena to be attained, it is easier to realize the *lack of true existence* of the five aggregates of an ordinary person than to realize the

lack of true existence of the five aggregates of a Buddha. Likewise, it is also easier to realize that the five aggregates of an ordinary person are *empty* of being truly existent objects of experience than to realize that the five aggregates of a Buddha are *empty* of being truly existent objects of experience. Hence it is easier to undermine misconceptions which apprehend thoroughly afflicted phenomena to be truly existent objects of experience than to undermine misconceptions which apprehend completely pure phenomena to be truly existent object of experience.

Regarding the two latter types of conception (which both apprehend truly existent experiencers) it is easier to undermine misconceptions which apprehend perceivers of substantial existence to be truly existent experiencers than to undermine misconceptions which apprehend perceivers of imputed existence to be truly existent experiencers. This is because it is easier to realize that perceivers of substantial existence are *empty* of being truly existent experiencers than to realize that perceivers of imputed existence are *empty* of being truly existent experiencers.

Regarding the meaning of perceivers of substantial existence and perceivers of imputed existence, according to the Madhyamika Prasangika tenet School, all phenomena are empty of true/inherent existence and are instead merely imputed or merely 'imputedly existent'. The opposite of being imputedly existent is to be substantially existent. Therefore, since whatever exists is imputedly existent there is nothing that is substantially existent. In fact, being substantially existent is the object of negation of emptiness, and thus equivalent to being truly/inherently existent.

Examples of perceivers of substantial existence are awarenesses perceiving a truly/substantially existent self, while examples of perceivers of imputed existence are awarenesses realizing the self to be merely imputed on the basis of the five aggregates. Since awarenesses perceiving a truly/substantially existent self are afflictive obstructions and thus need to be removed, whereas awarenesses realizing that the self is merely imputed are awarenesses to be cultivated and deepened, it is easier for Buddhist practitioners to realize the *lack of true existence* of awarenesses perceiving a truly/substantially existent self than to realize the *lack of true existence* of awarenesses realizing that the self is merely imputed. Likewise, it is also easier to realize that awarenesses perceiving a truly/substantially existent self are *empty* of being truly existent experiencers, than to realize that awarenesses realizing that the self is merely imputed are *empty* of being truly existent experiencers.

Therefore, it is easier to undermine misconceptions which apprehend perceivers of substantial existence to be truly existent experiencers than to undermine misconceptions which apprehend perceivers of imputed existence to be truly existent experiencers.

This completes the auxiliary presentation of the four misconceptions.

Regarding the actual root text (i.e. Maitreya's **Ornament**), as mentioned above, two verses set forth the Mahayana path of preparation by way of briefly presenting the five characteristics by which the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation while ten verses provide an extensive description of these characteristics:

The Ornament's brief presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation:

*Just as the focus and the aspect
And the cause and the tutor
A protecting Bodhisattva's
Embodiment of heat, and so forth.[26]*

*Dependent on being associated with four conceptual consciousnesses,
The small, middling, and great,
Are superior to those of
Hearers and Rhinoceros-like ones.[27]*

The meaning of the two verses is:

A protecting Bodhisattva's small, middling, and great heat, peak, and so forth are superior to the Hinayana path of preparation of **Hearers and Rhinoceros-like** Solitary Realizers because they are superior with regard to being **dependent on being associated with** the elimination of the **four conceptual consciousnesses just as** they are superior with regard to **the focus, the aspect, the cause, and the tutor**.

The five characteristics by which the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation are:

- (1) Focus
- (2) Aspect
- (3) Cause
- (4) Tutor
- (5) Mode of association

But there is another way to interpret these two verses, which is mentioned in Arya Vimuktisena's commentary on the **Ornament**. According to the other interpretation, the second line of the above cited second verse of the **Ornament** ("the small, the middling, and the great") presents a sixth characteristic of the Mahayana path of preparation, namely the characteristic of the three subdivisions of each of the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation, i.e. small, middling, and great.

Hence, the meaning of the two verses according to the second interpretation is:

A protecting Bodhisattva's heat, peak, etc. are superior to the path of preparation of Hearers and Rhinoceros-like Solitary Realizers because they are superior with regard to possessing the three subdivisions of **small, middling, and great**, and with regard to being **dependent on being associated with the elimination of the four conceptual consciousnesses just as** they are superior with regard to **the focus, the aspect, the cause, and the tutor**.

The Ornament's extensive presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation:

Verses 28 - 37 set forth the Mahayana path of preparation by providing extensive descriptions of the five or six characteristics. In particular, the first six and half verses (verses 28 until 33, and the first two lines of verse 34) explicitly describe the characteristics of the *focus* and *aspect* and implicitly the characteristic of the *cause* with regard to each of the twelve types of Mahayana path of preparation (i.e. the small, middling, and great heat level, the small, middling, and great peak level, the small, middling, and great forbearance level, and the small, middling, and great supreme Dharma level).

Please note that the sequence of the characteristics cited in the **Ornament's** brief presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation differs slightly from the sequence of those in the **Ornament's** extensive presentation. According to Lama Tsongkhapa's **Golden Rosary**, the two verses of the **Ornament's** brief presentation (verses 26 and 27) reveal the characteristic of the *tutor* prior to the characteristic of the *mode of association*, for this sequence complies better with the basic rhythmic structure of the two verses. On the other hand, the ten verses of the **Ornament's** extensive presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation present the characteristic of the *tutor* subsequent to the characteristic of the *mode of association* (and thus subsequent to the other characteristics) in order to indicate that these special characteristics of *focus*, *aspect*, *cause*, (*division*), and *mode of association* all arise in dependence on the tutor.

FOCUS, ASPECT & CAUSE

SMALL, MIDDLE, AND GREAT HEAT LEVEL:

The first two lines of verse 28 present the *focus* (the first characteristic) of the small heat level:

*The focus, impermanence and so forth,
Endowed with the support of the truths.*

The meaning of these lines is:

The sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, **impermanence, and so forth**, which are **endowed with the support of the four noble truths**, are **the focus** of the small heat level because they are the basis of eliminating superimpositions on the small heat level.

The sixteen aspects of the four noble truths are 'endowed with the support of the four noble truths' because they are the aspects or attributes of the four noble truths. Please note that dependent on the

context, the word 'aspect' (Tib.: *rnam pa*) has different meanings. Here in the context of the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, it refers to the sixteen *attributes* of the four truths; it does not refer to the aspect that is the second of the five characteristics of the Mahayana path of preparation, which is explained below.

The sixteen aspects of the four noble truths are 'the basis of eliminating superimpositions' because they are the basis of the wisdom that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects. They are the basis of the wisdom that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects because the wisdom that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects does so *based* on the sixteen aspects.

Furthermore, since the wisdom that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects eliminates the superimpositions that grasp at true existence of the sixteen aspects, the sixteen aspects are the *basis* of eliminating those superimpositions.

Hence, on account of being the basis of the wisdom that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects, the sixteen aspects are also its *focus*, for such wisdom realizes emptiness by focusing on the sixteen aspects.

The third line of verse 28 presents the *aspect* (the second characteristic) of the small heat level:

The aspect stops strong adherence to those, and so forth.

The meaning of these words is:

The wisdom on the small heat level that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths is **the aspect** of the small heat level because it is the small heat wisdom that **stops strong adherence to** the true existence of **those** sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, **and so forth**.

As mentioned above, the word 'aspect' has different connotations. Here in the context of the second of the five characteristics, the aspect refers to a meditative stabilization absorbed into emptiness on the Mahayana path of preparation that realizes the lack of true existence of its focus.

The fourth line of verse 28 presents the wisdom on the small heat level to be the *cause* of a special result (the third characteristic):

It is the cause of attaining all three vehicles [29]

The meaning of this line is:

The wisdom on the small heat level that realizes the lack of true existence of the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths acts as **the cause of** a special result because it is the cause of **attaining** the Mahayana path of seeing which encompasses paths that are typical of **all three vehicles** (Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicle).

The Mahayana path of seeing comprises paths that are typical of all three vehicles because in the continuum of a Bodhisattvas who has reached the path of seeing paths that are typical of the Hearer vehicle (knowers of bases), paths that are typical of the Solitary Realizer vehicle (knowers of bases), and paths that are typical of the Bodhisattva vehicle (knower of paths) arise. An example of a path that is typical of the Hearer and Solitary Realizer vehicle is the path that realizes the four noble truths. An example of a path that is typical of the Bodhisattva vehicle is Bodhicitta.

Please note that the **Ornament** explicitly describes only the wisdom on the small heat level to be the cause of a special result. Even though the other verses present the focus and the aspect of each of the remaining eleven levels of the Mahayana path of preparation (i.e. small, middling, and great peak level, small, middling, and great forbearance level, and so forth) they do not explicitly describe the wisdom on these levels to also be the cause of a special result. However, the line, "it is the cause of attaining all three vehicles", implies that also the remaining nine types of the Mahayana path of preparation are the causes of a special result because they are also the causes of attaining the Mahayana path of seeing.

The first line of verse 29 presents the *focus* and *aspect* of the middling heat level:

Forms, and so forth being free of assembling and establishment,

The meaning of this line is:

The four noble truths characterized by forms, and so forth being **free of** truly existent **assembling and establishment** are the focus of the middling heat level.

According to Lama Tsongkhapa's **Golden Rosary**, here forms, and so forth being free of truly existent assembling and establishment refers to forms, etc. lacking truly existent production and cessation.

The second line of verse 29 presents the *aspect* of the middling heat level, the *focus* of the great heat level, and the *aspect* of the great heat level:

Abidance, designation, and not describable.

The meaning of this line is:

The wisdom on the middling heat level that realizes the lack of true existence of the non-**abidance** of the continuum of the name and the lack of true existence of the abidance of the continuum of the name is the aspect of the middling heat level. The four noble truths characterized by forms, and so forth being terminologically **designated** is the focus of the great heat level. And the wisdom on the great heat level that realizes that forms, and so forth, are **not** truly **describable** is the aspect of the great heat level.

Regarding the lack of true existence of the non-**abidance** of the continuum of the name and the lack of true existence of the abidance of the continuum of the name, Gyaltsab je explains that since names lack true existence there is no truly existent dissimilar continuum of a name and no truly existent similar continuum of a name.

With regard to the four noble truths characterized by forms, and so forth being terminologically **designated**, Gyaltsab je explains that all phenomena, from forms up to the Buddhas, are terminologically designated; they are mere nominal conventions (i.e. merely imputed).

Also, forms, and so forth, are **not** truly **describable** because there is not a single phenomenon that can be described as being an ultimately existent virtue, and so on.

SMALL, MIDDLE, AND GREAT PEAK LEVEL:

There are two ways in which to present the *focus* and the *aspect* of the small peak level:

- (i) The presentation of the *focus* and *aspect* of the small peak level from the point of view of not positing the four noble truths
- (ii) The presentation of the *focus* and *aspect* of the small peak level from the point of view of positing the four noble truths

(i) The presentation of the focus and aspect of the small peak level from the point of view of not positing the four noble truths

The third and fourth lines of verse 29 describe the *focus* of the small peak level and the first line of verse 30 the *aspect* of the small peak level:

*Those forms and so forth not abiding,
Their entities have no nature. [29]*

They are each other's nature

The meaning of these lines is:

That which is characterized by **those forms, and so forth not abiding** ultimately and their **entities having** ultimately **no nature**, is the focus of the small peak level. The wisdom on the small peak level that realizes that forms, and so forth, and their dharmata (emptiness) **are each other's nature** is the aspect of the small peak level.

(ii) The presentation of the focus and aspect of the small peak level from the point of view of positing the four noble truths

The second and third line of verse 30 describe the *focus* of the small peak level and the fourth line of the verse 30 the *aspect* of the small peak level:

*Not abiding as being impermanent, and so forth,
Those being empty of such entity.
They are each other's nature [30]*

The meaning of the three lines is:

The four noble truths characterized by forms, and so forth **not** ultimately **abiding as being impermanent, and so forth**, owing to **those** forms, and so forth **being empty of such entity** (i.e. ultimate impermanence) are the focus of the small peak level.

The wisdom on the small peak level that realizes that impermanence, and so forth, and its dharmata (emptiness) **are each other's nature** is the aspect of the small peak level.

The next verse (verse 31) describes the *focus* and *aspects* of the middling and great peak level, with the first line presenting the *focus* of the middling peak level, the second line the *aspect* of the middling peak level, the third line the *focus* of the great peak level, and the fourth line the *aspect* of the great peak level.

*Phenomena not being apprehended,
Since those features are not perceived,
Wisdom fully investigating,
All are not observed. [31]*

The meaning of this verse is:

The four noble truths characterized by **phenomena not being apprehended** as having ultimate features are the focus of the middling peak level. The wisdom on the middling peak level that realizes that **those** truly existent **features** of form, and so forth cannot be **perceived** is the aspect of the middling peak level. The four noble truths characterized by the **wisdom** - which analyzes the ultimate - **fully investigating** phenomena are the focus of the great peak level. And the wisdom on the great peak level that realizes that the three spheres (agent, action, and object) are ultimately unobservable is the aspect of the great peak level.

SMALL, MIDDLE, AND GREAT FORBEARANCE LEVEL:

The first line of verse 32 presents the *focus* of the small forbearance level and the second line the *aspect* of the small forbearance level:

*Forms and so forth lacking an entity,
Their lack of existence is [their] very entity*

The meaning of these two lines is:

The four noble truths characterized by **forms, and so forth lacking** an ultimate **entity** is the focus of the small forbearance level. The wisdom on the small forbearance level realizing that the **lack of** ultimate **existence** of forms, and so forth is **their** nominal **entity** is the aspect of the small forbearance level.

The third line of verse 32 describes the *focus* of the middling forbearance level and the beginning of the fourth line its *aspect*:

*Those lack production and lack definite emergence,
Purifies,...*

The meaning of these words is:

The four noble truths characterized by the **lack** of the ultimate existence of the **production** of form, and so forth being Samsara and the **lack** of the ultimate existence of their **definite emergence** being Nirvana is the focus of the middling forbearance. The aspect on the middling forbearance level refers to the wisdom on the middling forbearance level realizing that the complete purity of the body etc., after having observed and meditated on the four noble truths in the above way, **purifies** one's body, etc.

The remaining words of the fourth line of verse 32 present the *focus* of the great forbearance level and the first two lines of verse 33 its *aspect*:

...Those having no features, [32]

*Since they are not dependent on their features,
Neither adhere nor perceive.*

The meaning of these words is:

The four noble truths characterized by **those** forms, and so forth **having** ultimately **no features** are the focus of the great forbearance level. The aspect of the great forbearance level refers to the wisdom on the great forbearance level realizing that - since forms, and so forth are ultimately not dependent on their features - **neither** the awareness called 'adhering mental engagement' **nor** the awareness called 'mental engagement of suchness' ultimately **adhere** and **perceive** features.

Here 'adhering mental engagement' (Tib.: *mos pa yid byed*) refers to a conceptual consciousness realizing emptiness and 'mental engagement of suchness' to a meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness.

SMALL, MIDDLING, AND GREAT SUPREME DHARMA LEVEL:

The third line of verse 34 presents the *focus* and *aspect* of the small supreme Dharma level:

Meditative stabilization, the very activity of that,

The meaning of this line is:

The four noble truths being of one nature with the object of meditation, **meditative stabilization** of a Buddha is the focus of the small supreme Dharma level. The aspect of the small supreme Dharma level constitutes the awareness on the supreme Dharma level realizing the spontaneous engagement in **the very activity of that** meditative stabilization.

According to Gyaltsab je's *Ornament of the Essence*, the wisdom on the small supreme Dharma level refers to the small supreme Dharma level wisdom realizing the engagement in the activity of the meditative stabilization in the continuum of a Buddha who works spontaneously for the welfare of all sentient beings.

The fourth line of verse 34 describes the *focus* and *aspect* of the middling supreme Dharma level:

Prediction and extinguished grasping. [34]

The meaning of this line is:

The four noble truths characterized by being of one nature with the cause of the hidden **prediction** are the focus of the middling supreme Dharma level. The wisdom on the middling supreme Dharma level realizing that the Bodhisattva on the middling supreme Dharma level **extinguished grasping** onto the true existence of the three spheres (agent, action, and object), and hence the pride, thinking, "I absorbed into emptiness," is the aspect of the middling supreme Dharma level.

Gyaltsab je explains that here the hidden prediction refers to the prediction that is made by a Buddha when a Bodhisattva reaches the middling supreme Dharma level. A Buddha predicts the time and location of the Bodhisattva's future enlightenment and since it is not done in public it is called 'hidden prediction'.

The first line of verse 35 presents the *focus* of the great supreme Dharma level and the second line the *aspect* of the great supreme Dharma level:

*The three, being of one nature with one another,
Not conceptualizing meditative stabilizations*

The meaning of the two lines is:

The four noble truths characterized by the lack of true existence (i.e. emptiness) of each of **the three** spheres **being of one nature with one another** is the focus of the great supreme Dharma level. The wisdom on the great supreme Dharma level refers to the wisdom on the great supreme Dharma level

realizing that **not conceptualizing** the true existence of the **meditative stabilizations** that realize emptiness is the method to achieving enlightenment.

The three spheres here refer to (1) meditative stabilization, (2) wisdom, and (3) the Bodhisattva him or herself.

This completes the extensive description of the first three characteristics of the Mahayana path of preparation, *focus, aspect, and cause*.

Please note that even though the four levels of the Hinayana path of preparation - the Hinayana heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme Dharma level - also focus on the four noble truths and realize emptiness, the Mahayana path of preparation is nonetheless superior since (as indicated in the above cited verses of the **Ornament**) it focuses on the numerous different facets of the four noble truth while the Hinayana path of preparation does not. Likewise, it realizes the lack of true existence in dependence on numerous logical reasons while the Hinayana path of preparation does not.

DIVISION

The third and fourth lines of verse 35 present the fourth characteristic, the characteristic of the *division*, which refers to the threefold subdivision of the Mahayana path of preparation (small, middling, and great):

*In such a way, the concordance with definite discrimination
Is small, middling, and great.*

The meaning of the two lines is:

In such a way, each of the four levels of **the concordance with definite discrimination** (i.e. the path of preparation) is subdivided into a **small, middling, and great** level.

The term 'concordance with definite discrimination' (Tib.: *nges 'byed cha mthun*) is another term for the 'path of preparation'. Hence, the *characteristic of the division* refers to the fact that each of the four levels of the path of preparation is subdivided into a small, middling, and great level. This is different from the Hinayana path of preparation, for even though the Hinayana heat, peak, and forbearance levels can each be subdivided into a small, middling, and great level, the Hinayana **supreme Dharma** level does not have such subdivisions. The Hinayana supreme Dharma level does not have such subdivisions because it is explained that both the Hinayana great forbearance level and the Hinayana supreme Dharma level last only for one 'final moment in time' (Tib.: *dus mtha' skad cig ma*). According to the **Abidharmakosha**, the length of one 'final moment in time' refers to the sixty-fifth of the time it takes a healthy person to snap his finger.

MODE OF ASSOCIATION

Verses 36 and 37 present the fifth characteristic, the characteristic of the *mode of association*. The characteristic of the mode of association describes the above mentioned four misconceptions. Verse 36 presents the first two types of misconceptions: (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception:

*Since there are bases and antidotes to those,
Conceptions of objects of perception are of two types.
Since there are instances of confusion and aggregates, and so forth,
They each have nine types.*

The meaning of this verse is:

Since there are conceptions of objects of perception that focus on **bases** (i.e. thoroughly afflicted phenomena) **and** conceptions of objects of perception that focus on **antidotes to those** bases (i.e. very pure phenomena) **conceptions of objects of perception** (Tib.: *gzung rtog*) **are of two types**: (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception.

Furthermore, **since there are instances** of conceptions of objects of perception focusing on **confusion** (i.e. ignorance), completely pure **aggregates, and so forth** 'conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' and 'conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception' **each have nine types**.

In other words, as mentioned above, 'conceptions of objects of perception' can be categorized into (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception, for there are 'conceptions of objects of perception' that focus on the faction of thoroughly afflicted phenomena (bases) and apprehend them to be truly existent objects of experience, and 'conceptions of objects of experience' that focus on the faction of very pure phenomena (the antidotes to those thoroughly afflicted phenomena) and apprehend them to be truly existent objects of experience.

Moreover, 'conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' can be classified into nine different types such as conceptual consciousnesses which focus on ignorance and apprehend it to be a truly existent object of experience, conceptual consciousnesses which focus on the contaminated form aggregate, etc. and apprehend it to be a truly existent object of experience, and so forth. These two conceptions are 'conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' because ignorance and the contaminated form aggregate are both thoroughly afflicted phenomena, and because the two conceptions are conceptual consciousnesses that apprehend these thoroughly afflicted phenomena to be truly existent objects of experience.

Similarly, 'conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perceptions' can also be classified into nine different types such as conceptual consciousnesses which focus on very pure aggregates and apprehend them to be truly existent objects of experience, conceptual consciousnesses which focus on emptiness and apprehend it to be a truly existent object of experience, and so forth. These two conceptual consciousnesses are 'conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception' because pure aggregates and emptiness are very pure phenomena, and because the two conceptions are awarenesses that apprehend these very pure phenomena to be truly existent objects of experience.

Verse 37 describes the third and fourth types of misconceptions: (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence:

*Since they are endowed with the support of the substantial and imputed,
Conceptions of perceivers are also asserted to be of two types.
Since there is the entity of an independent self, and so forth,
As well as the support, the aggregates and so forth, they are similar.*

The meaning of this verse is:

Since conceptions of perceivers (Tib.: *gzung rtog*) are **endowed with the support** of focusing on perceivers of **substantial and imputed** existence, they **are also asserted to be of two types**: (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence.

Moreover, **since there** are conceptions of perceivers focusing on **the entity of an independent, truly existent self, and so forth, as well as on** that which is endowed with **the support, the aggregates, and so forth**, 'conceptions of substantial existence' and 'conceptions of imputed existence' **are similar** to the first two conceptions, for they can each be classified into nine types.

In other words, 'conceptions of perceivers' can be categorized into (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence since there are 'conceptions of perceivers' that focus on perceivers of substantial existence and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers, and 'conceptions of perceivers' that focus on perceivers of imputed existence and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers.

Furthermore, 'conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence' can be classified into nine different types of conceptions such as conceptual consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of an independent, truly existent self and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers, conceptual

consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of a unitary truly existent self and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers, and so forth. These two conceptions are 'conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence' because perceivers that apprehend an independent, truly existent self or a unitary truly existent self are awarenesses that perceive substantial existence, and because the two conceptions apprehend these perceivers of substantial existence to be truly existent experiencers.

Similarly, 'conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence' can also be classified into nine different types of conceptions such as conceptual consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of a person being imputed on the aggregates and apprehend them to be truly existent experiencers, conceptual consciousnesses which focus on perceivers of a person being imputed on the path of seeing and apprehend them to be truly existence experiencers, and so forth. These conceptual consciousnesses are 'conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence' because perceivers that apprehend a person to be imputed on the aggregates or imputed on the path of seeing are awarenesses that perceive imputed existence, and because the two conceptions apprehend these perceivers of imputed existence to be truly existent experiencers.

Verses 36 and 37 present the characteristic of the *mode of association* by way of implicitly indicating that the four conceptions are associated with the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation. They are associated with the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation on account of the four conceptions and their imprints being objects of elimination and the four levels their antidotes. This means, as explained above, that:

- (i) meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness on the heat level undermine 'conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perceptions' and their imprints
- (ii) meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness on the peak level undermine 'conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perceptions' and their imprints
- (iii) meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness on the forbearance level undermine 'conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence' and their imprints
- (iv) meditative stabilizations absorbed into emptiness on the supreme Dharma level undermine 'conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence' and their imprints

TUTOR

Verse 38 sets forth the Mahayana path of preparation's characteristic of the *tutor*. The first, third, and fourth lines present the inner tutor and the second, third, and fourth lines the outer tutor:

*Mind that is undaunted, and so forth,
Who teaches the lack of entities,
Casts aside the unfavorable factors of those,
Are in every respect the tutor.*

The meaning of this verse is:

On the path of preparation a Bodhisattva's **mind that is** conjoined with Bodhicitta and **undaunted, unafraid, and so forth**, of emptiness, and a Bodhisattva's wisdom that **casts aside unfavorable factors**, such as the aspiration to attain self-liberation and grasping at true existence, **are in every respect the inner tutor** of the Mahayana path of preparation because they are accomplishments on the Mahayana path of preparation that counteract the two extremes of Samsara and Peace (i.e. self-liberation).

The *Supreme Emanation Body* **who teaches** a Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of preparation **the lack of ultimate entities**, and so forth and who **casts aside unfavorable factors**, such as Maras and bad companions, is **in every respect the outer tutor** of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation because he is a spiritual guide who perfectly teaches method and wisdom.

This verse presents the characteristic of the *tutor*, since it indicates that a Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of preparation has an outer and inner tutor. The inner tutor refers to the Bodhisattva's great compassion, Bodhicitta, and so forth while his outer tutor refers to the *Supreme Emanation Body* who guides him. Of the inner and outer tutor the inner tutor is most essential.

This completes the **Ornament's** extensive presentation of the characteristics of the Mahayana path of preparation.

To summarize this extensive presentation:

1. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *focus* because it focuses on the numerous different facets of the four noble truths while the Hinayana path of preparation does not.
 2. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *aspect* because it realizes the emptiness of the four noble truths by means of countless different logical reasons while the Hinayana path of preparation does not.
 3. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *cause* because it acts as the cause of the Mahayana path of seeing which encompasses paths that are typical of all three vehicles (Hearer, Solitary Realizer, and Bodhisattva vehicle) while the Hinayana path of preparation does not.
 4. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *division* because each of its four levels is subdivided into a small, middling, and great level while each of the four levels of the Hinayana path of preparation is not.
 5. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *mode of association* because each of the four levels is associated with one of the four conceptions on account of being the antidotes to those conceptions as well their imprints while each of the four levels of the Hinayana path of preparation is not.
 6. The Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation from the point of view of the *tutor* because practitioners on the Mahayana path of preparation possess an inner tutor of great compassion, Bodhicitta, etc. and an outer tutor that perfectly teaches them the method and wisdom required to attain Buddhahood, while practitioners on the Hinayana path of preparation do not possess such tutors.
- Someone has an objection to the way the **Ornament** presents the focuses and aspects of the different levels of the Mahayana path of preparation. His objection is as follows:
When presenting the focus of the small heat level the **Ornament** says:

*The focus, impermanence and so forth,
Endowed with the support of the truths.*

Hence, when the two lines describe the focus of the small heat level to be the sixteen aspects (impermanence and so forth) the **Ornament** explicitly mentions that the sixteen aspects are the characteristics or attributes of the four noble truths by saying that the sixteen aspects are "endowed with the support of the truths". However, the verses subsequent to these two lines, which present the focuses and aspects of the remaining eleven levels of the Mahayana path of preparation, fail to explicitly state that the focuses of these levels are attributes of the four noble truths. Therefore, students of the **Ornament** will not understand that the focuses of the middling heat level, the great heat level, the small peak level, and so forth are also attributes of the four noble truths, i.e. that the four noble truths are the basis of these attributes, and thus they will not understand that the focuses and aspects of the remaining levels of the Mahayana path of preparation depend on the four noble truths.

Our response to this objection is that even though the other verses do not *explicitly* indicate that the focuses of the remaining levels are attributes of the four noble truths, they do so *implicitly*. The other verses indicate that the remaining levels are attributes of the four noble truths because they are 'sound expressing the attribute' (Tib.: *chos brjod kyi sgra*) with regard to the four noble truths.

The two lines that present the small heat level of the Mahayana path of preparation, on the other hand, are 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' (Tib.: *chos can brjod pa'i sgra*) with regard to the four noble truths.

In order to comprehend the above response it is important to understand that from the point of view of the mode of indicating attributes and the bearers of these attributes, there are two types of expressive sound: 'sound expressing the attribute' and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute'.

For instance, the two statements: "impermanent vase" and "impermanence of vase" are similar in that they both indicate impermanence and vase. Yet they differ in terms of the mode of indication.

In the statement "impermanent vase" *vase* is the principal phenomenon and *impermanent* its attribute. Therefore, the statement "impermanent vase" is (1) 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *impermanent* and (2) 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *vase*, for it indicates that (1) *impermanent* is the attribute and (2) *vase* the basis of the attribute. Furthermore, since the statement "impermanent vase" is 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *impermanent* it is also 'sound that eliminates other qualifications' (Tib.: *khyad par gzhan spong gi sgra*) with regard to *impermanent*. It is 'sound that eliminates other qualifications' with regard to *impermanent* because from the perspective of the awareness that perceives the statement "impermanent vase" *impermanent* qualifies vase but no other phenomenon.

Similarly, since the statement "impermanent vase" is 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *vase*, it is also 'sound that does not eliminate other qualification' (Tib.: *khyad par gzhan mi spong gi sgra*) with regard to *vase*. It is 'sound that does not eliminate other qualifications' with regard to *vase* because from the perspective of the awareness that perceives the statement "impermanent vase" *vase* does not qualify impermanent.

In the statement "impermanence of vase", on the other hand, *impermanence* is the principal phenomenon and *vase* its attribute. Hence, the statement "impermanence of vase" is (1) 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *vase* and (2) 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *impermanence* because it indicates that (1) *vase* is the attribute and (2) *impermanence* the basis for the attribute. Moreover, since the statement "impermanence of vase" is 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *vase* it is also 'sound that eliminates other qualifications' with regard to *vase*. It is 'sound that eliminates other qualifications' with regard to *vase* because from the perspective of the awareness that perceives the statement "impermanence of vase" *vase* qualifies impermanence but no other phenomena. Similarly, since the statement "the impermanence of vase" is 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *impermanence*, it is also 'sound that does not eliminate other qualifications' with regard to *impermanence*. It is 'sound that does not eliminate other qualifications' with regard to *impermanence* because from the perspective of the awareness that perceives the statement "the impermanence of vase" *impermanence* does not qualify vase.

Returning to the verses of the **Ornament**, as mentioned above, the first two lines of verse 28 that describe the focus of the small heat level are 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths and 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths. However, the other verses of the **Ornament** that present the focuses of the remaining levels of the Mahayana path of preparation are 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regards to the attributes of the four noble truths. Therefore, by way of being 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths, the other verses indicate *implicitly* that the focus of the remaining levels are attributes of the four noble truths.

This completes a general description of the Mahayana path of preparation based on Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **General Meaning**.

Next follows a presentation of the Mahayana path of preparation according to Panchen Sonam Drakpa's **Decisive Analysis** which reveals a number of different debates.

Elaborating on the verses of the **Ornament** that present a brief description of the five or six characteristics of the Mahayana path of preparation:

Just as the focus and the aspect ...

and so forth, Panchen Sonam Drakpa sets forth (1) a syllogism and (2) analysis.

The syllogism:

Regarding the subject, the Mahayana path of preparation, it is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation by way of six characteristics because it is superior by way of the *focus*, the *aspect*, the *cause*, the *tutor*, the *mode of association*, and the *division*.

- Someone says that it is incorrect that the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation by way of the characteristic of the *division* because the Hinayana path of preparation can also be subdivided into a small, middling, and great level.

Our response to this argument is that there is no pervasion, i.e. even though the Hinayana path of preparation can be subdivided into a small, middling, and great level, this does not mean that it is incorrect that the Mahayana path of preparation is superior to the Hinayana path of preparation by way of the characteristic of the *division*. The reason is that although the heat, peak, and forbearance levels of the Hinayana path of preparation can each be subdivided into a small, middling, and great level, the supreme Dharma level of this path cannot be subdivided in such a way. The supreme Dharma level of the Hinayana path of preparation cannot be subdivided into a small, middling, and great level because (as mentioned above) both the great forbearance level and the supreme Dharma level of the Hinayana path of preparation last only for one 'final moment in time' (Tib.: *dus mtha' skad cig ma*).

Analysis:

The section of the analysis consists of:

- (1) The support (of the Mahayana path of preparation) and
- (2) The nature (of the Mahayana path of preparation)

(1) The nature

The support of the Mahayana path of preparation is subdivided into:

- i. The physical support
- ii. The mental support

i. The physical support

As mentioned before, the physical support of the Mahayana path of preparation refers to the type of rebirth a practitioner abides in to be able to *newly* cultivate the heat, peak, forbearance, or supreme Dharma levels of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Bodhisattvas who are humans of one of the three continents or celestial beings of the Desire Realm are able to newly attain the heat or peak levels of the Mahayana path of preparation. But they can also newly reach these two levels of the path of preparation as celestial beings of the Form Realm because Gyaltsab je says in his **Ornament of the Essence**:

Even though [beings of the Form Realm are] not the physical support for directly generating the supreme Dharma level, apparently some beings of the Form Realm [newly] generate the heat and peak levels.

Also, Bodhisattvas who are celestial beings of the Form Realm can newly attain the heat and peak levels of the Mahayana path of preparation because there are Bodhisattvas who are celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the *great* Mahayana path of accumulation. There are celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the *great* Mahayana path of accumulation because there are celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the Mahayana path of accumulation.

However, there are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the forbearance and supreme Dharma levels of the Mahayana path of preparation because there are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation. There are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation because there are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the *great* supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation. There are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the *great* supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation because there are no celestial beings of the Form Realm who newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing.

ii. *The mental support*

As mentioned above, the mental support here refers to the type of awareness with which practitioners newly attain any of the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Whatever is the mental support of any of the four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation is necessarily one of the four concentrations because whoever is a Bodhisattva who reached the great Mahayana path of accumulation has necessarily attained one of the four concentrations, and because if one has attained a more preferable awareness such as one of the four concentrations, there is no reason to rely on a less preferable awareness such as, for instance, the preparatory stage of the first concentration.

Whoever is a Bodhisattva who reached the great Mahayana path of accumulation has necessarily attained the first concentration because whoever is such a Bodhisattva has necessarily attained the 'Mental Stability of Continuous Dharma' (Tib.: *chos rgyun gyi ting nge 'dzin*) - a prerequisite of which is the cultivation of the first concentration.

In general, there are different types of awareness that can serve as the mental support of a Mahayana path: (1) an awareness that pertains to the Desire Realm, (2) an awareness that pertains to the preparatory stage of the first concentration, (3) an awareness that pertains to one of the four concentrations, or (4) an awareness that pertains to one of the four absorptions of the Formless Realm.

However, with regard to the mental support of the Mahayana *path of preparation*, an awareness that pertains to the Desire Realms cannot serve as the mental support of any of the levels of the Mahayana path of preparation because it is too scattered. One of the four absorptions of the Formless Realm cannot serve as such a mental support because its factor of calm abiding is too strong. The preparatory stage of the first concentration does not serve as such a mental support because practitioners who attained the Mahayana path of preparation must have previously attained the *great* Mahayana path of accumulation and thus attained at least the first concentration. If practitioners have attained the first concentration they do not utilize the preparatory stage of the first concentration because of the two, the preparatory stage of the first concentration and the first concentration itself, the first concentration is a more stable mental support.

Please note that the attainment of the first concentration is preceded by the attainment of the preparatory stage of the first concentration, the attainment of the second concentration is preceded by the attainment of the preparatory stage of the second concentration, and so forth.

The preparatory stages of each of the four concentrations have a relatively high degree of mental stability and thus the preparatory stage of the first concentration can serve as the mental support of paths in the continua of those practitioners who have not yet cultivated the first concentration.

However, since the first concentration's level of mental stability is greater than that of any of the four preparatory stages and since the cultivation of the first concentration precedes the cultivation of any of the remaining preparatory stages (as well as of the second, third, and fourth concentrations), practitioners who attained the first concentration (but not any of the remaining concentrations) utilize the first concentration as the mental support rather than the first or second preparatory stage. Practitioners who attained the second concentration (but not the third and fourth concentrations) utilize the first or second concentration rather than the first, second, or third preparatory stages, and so forth.

(2) The nature

In Panchen Sonam Drakpa's *Decisive Analysis* the nature of a phenomenon refers to its definition.

- Regarding the definition of the Mahayana path of preparation, someone asserts that 'a mundane path that arises subsequent to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation)' is the definition of the Mahayana path of preparation.

This definition is not correct because whatever is a Mahayana path of preparation is not necessarily a 'mundane path that arises subsequent to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation)'. For instance, the Mahayana path of preparation in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who prior to entering the Mahayana path of accumulation achieved the state of a Hearer Foe Destroyer is a

Mahayana path of preparation but does not accord with this definition. It does not accord with this definition because it is not a mundane path. The Mahayana path of preparation in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who prior to entering the Mahayana path of accumulation achieved the state of a Hearer or a Destroyer is not a mundane path because it is a supermundane path. It is a supermundane path because it is a path in the continuum of an Arya. It is a path in the continuum of an Arya because it is a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who prior to entering the Mahayana path attained the Hinayana paths of seeing, meditation, and no-more-learning (which are Arya/supermundane paths).

Another example of a Mahayana path of preparation that does not accord with the definition is: the Mahayana path of preparation that is a cause of the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation. It does not accord with the definition because it does not arise *subsequent* to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation. It does not arise subsequent to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation because it arises *prior* to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation. It arises prior to the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation because it is a cause of the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation.

- Someone asserts that the Mahayana path of preparation realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a supermundane path.

This assertion is not correct because a Mahayana path of preparation realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a mundane path, and because here a mundane or supermundane path is posited from the point of view of a path in the continuum of an ordinary person or an Arya respectively; it is not posited from the point of view of a path the main object of which is a conventional or an ultimate truth.

In other words, a mundane path refers to a path in the continuum of an ordinary person while a supermundane path refers to a path in the continuum of an Arya. An ordinary person is someone who has not yet attained a meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness and an Arya is someone who has attained such a meditative equipoise.

In the case of the above assertion, the person asserts that a mundane path refers to a path that takes to mind a conceptual or an ultimate truth. Yet this is not correct because an awareness the main object of which is a conventional truth in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of seeing is not a mundane path but a supermundane path.

- Someone holds that 'a Mahayana clear realization mainly arisen from meditation' is the definition of the Mahayana path of preparation.

This is not correct because whatever is a Mahayana path of preparation is not necessarily 'a Mahayana clear realization mainly arisen from meditation' because there are Mahayana paths of preparation that are wisdoms arisen from listening or contemplation and because wisdoms arisen from listening or contemplation are not mainly arisen from meditation. Wisdoms arisen from listening or contemplation are not mainly arisen from meditation because the three types of wisdom - wisdom arisen from listening, wisdom arisen from contemplation, and wisdom arisen from meditation - do not have a common locus. Furthermore, there are Mahayana paths of preparation that are wisdoms arisen from listening or contemplation because in Asanga's *Abhidharmasamucchaya* (Tib.: *mngon pa kun btus* / *Compendium of Knowledge*), etc. it is explained that there are Mahayana paths of *accumulation* that are wisdoms arisen from listening or contemplation.

- Someone else says that in general, the Mahayana path of preparation is not mainly arisen from meditation because there is a Mahayana path of preparation that is a wisdom arisen from listening or contemplation and such a wisdom arisen from listening or contemplation is not mainly arisen from meditation.

There is no pervasion, i.e. even though there is a Mahayana path of preparation that is a wisdom arisen from listening or contemplation and such wisdom is not mainly arisen from meditation, this does not

mean that in general, the Mahayana path of preparation is not a wisdom that is mainly arisen from meditation.

If there were a pervasion and your reason were correct, it would absurdly follow that in general, the Mahayana path of accumulation is not mainly arisen from listening or contemplation because there is a Mahayana path of accumulation that is a wisdom arisen from meditation and such wisdom is not mainly arisen from either listening or contemplation.

In other words, in general, the Mahayana path of accumulation is mainly arisen from listening and contemplation while the Mahayana path of preparation is mainly arisen from meditation. However, this does not contradict the fact that in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of accumulation a wisdom arisen from meditation (which is not mainly arisen from listening and contemplation) may manifest, and in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of preparation a wisdom arisen from listening or contemplation (which is not mainly arisen from meditation) may manifest.

According to our own system the definition of the Mahayana path of preparation is:

The Mahayana 'clear realization of the meaning' that arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the Mahayana path of concordance with liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation).

The meaning of the different aspects of the definition is:

- ❖ **The Mahayana 'clear realization of the meaning'**: As mentioned before, a clear realization refers to a path consciousness. The 'clear realization of the meaning' (Tib.: *don mgon rtogs*) is another name for the path of preparation. Hence the Mahayana 'clear realization of the meaning' and the Mahayana path of preparation are equivalent.
- ❖ **It arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the path of concordance with liberation**: As mentioned above, the 'path of concordance with liberation' (Tib.: *thar pa cha mthun*) is another name for the path of accumulation. Therefore, the path of concordance with liberation and the path of accumulation are equivalent. The Mahayana path of preparation arises subsequent to the completion of its cause, the path of concordance with liberation (i.e. the path of accumulation), because it cannot arise before the path of concordance with liberation is completed and because it is produced by the path of concordance with liberation, and thus generated subsequent to it.

The categories of the Mahayana path of preparation

The Mahayana path of preparation can be classified into: the heat, peak, forbearance, and supreme Dharma levels.

- Someone asserts that the meaning of each of the four levels is as follows: the heat level newly attains clear appearance of the lack of true existence of objects of perception, the peak level has advanced clear appearance of the lack of true existence of objects of perception, the forbearance level newly attains clear appearance of the lack of true existence of perceivers, and the supreme Dharma level has advanced clear appearance of the lack of true existence of perceivers.

This is not correct because whatever is a Mahayana path of preparation does not necessarily realize emptiness. For instance, great compassion or Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation do not realize emptiness. They do not realize emptiness because their object of engagement is not the direct opposite to the object of engagement of a mind that grasps at true existence. The object of engagement of great compassion or Bodhicitta in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not the direct opposite to the object of engagement of a mind that grasps at true existence because Dharmakirti says in his *Pramanavartika* (Tib.: *tshad ma rnam 'grel*):

*Since love, and so forth, is not the opposite of confusion
It does not annihilate the utmost fault.*

The four levels of the Mahayana path of preparation can each be further subdivided into a small, middling, and great level.

- With regard to this subdivision, someone asserts that from the point of view of *one* mental continuum the path of preparation that is generated first is a small path of preparation, the path of preparation that is generated in the middle is a middling path of preparation, and the path of preparation that is generated towards the end is a great path of preparation. But from the point of view of *different* mental continuums the path of preparation in the continuum of a practitioner of weak mental capacity is a small path of preparation, the path of preparation in the continuum of a practitioner of middling mental capacity is a middling path of preparation, and the path of preparation of sharp mental faculty is a great path of preparation.
Furthermore, whatever is a small path of preparation from the point of view of *different* mental continuums is necessarily a small path of preparation, whatever is a middling path of preparation from the point of view of *different* mental continuums is necessarily a middling path of preparation, and whatever is a great path of preparation from the point of view of *different* mental continuums is necessarily a great path of preparation. However, from the point of view of *one* mental continuum, if it is a path of preparation that is generated at the beginning it is not necessarily a small path of preparation, if it is a path of preparation that is generated in the middle it is not necessarily a middling path of preparation, and if it is a path of preparation that is generated towards the end it is not necessarily a great path of preparation.
Therefore, whether a path of preparation is a small, middling, or great path of preparation depends on whether a practitioner is of weak, middling, or sharp mental faculty.
- In response, to this assertion another person puts forth the following debate: Regarding the subject, the path of preparation that is generated at the beginning and that arises in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of sharp mental faculty, it follows that it is a *great* path of preparation, because it is a path of preparation in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of sharp mental faculty. If one accepts the response is: regarding the subject, the path of preparation that is generated at the beginning and that arises in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of sharp mental faculty, it follows that it is not a *great* path of preparation, because it is a *small* path of preparation. It is small path of preparation because it is a path of preparation that is generated at the beginning.

Our own response to the second debate is that the debate is not based on the first person's assertion, for the first person asserts that if it is a small path of preparation from the point of view of *one* mental continuum it is not necessarily a small path of preparation. Therefore, the first person does not accept that a path of preparation that is generated at the beginning is necessarily a small path of preparation.

Our response to the first assertion ("With regard to this subdivision, someone asserts that from the point of view of *one* mental continuum...") is that if a path of preparation being a small, middling, or great path of preparation were to depend on whether a practitioner is of weak, middling, or sharp mental faculty the following absurdity would ensue:

Regarding the subject, paths of meditation on the three pure bhūmis (i.e. the eighth, ninth, and tenth bhūmi) in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of weak mental capacity, it follows that they are not great paths of meditation, because they are small paths of meditation. They are small paths of meditation because they are paths of meditation in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of weak mental capacity. However, it is not correct to assert that paths of meditation on the three pure bhūmis in the continuum of a Bodhisattva of weak mental capacity are *small* paths of meditation because they are *great* paths of meditation. They are great (or strong) paths of meditation because their objects of elimination are small (or subtle) obstructions. Their objects of elimination are small obstructions because their objects of elimination are subtle cognitive obstructions.

When the object of elimination of a path is small, then the path is necessarily great, while if the object of elimination of a path is great, then the path is necessarily small. The reason for this is that the relationship between objects of elimination and the path that eliminates them is described in dependence on the analogy of a person washing clothes: the great or coarse dirt can be cleaned by a person who does not scrub hard (i.e. a small or weak washer) while the small or subtle dirt can only be cleaned by someone who scrubs hard (i.e. a great or strong washer).

According to our own system the subdivision of each of the four levels of the path of preparation into a small, middling, and great level is from the point of view of a path of preparation generated at the beginning, middle, and end. It is not from the point of view of a practitioner of weak, middling, or sharp mental faculty.

Examining the type of awareness

This section examines the type of awareness that constitutes the path of preparation that is a union of calm abiding and special insight realizing emptiness.

- Someone asserts that the path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is an inferential cognizer.

This is not correct because the path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is not an awareness arisen from contemplation. It is not an awareness arisen from contemplation because it is an awareness arisen from meditation. It is an awareness arisen from meditation because it is a meditative absorption that is a Mahayana path of preparation.

- Someone holds that the path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is a direct perceiver.

This is also not correct because a Bodhisattva who is on the path of preparation and entered the Mahayana path from the outset does not realize emptiness directly. He does not realize emptiness directly because he is an ordinary person. Furthermore, the path of preparation single-pointedly absorbed into emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva who entered the Mahayana path from the outset is not a direct perceiver because it is a conceptual subsequent cognizer. It is a conceptual subsequent cognizer because it is a conceptual knower that realizes emptiness through the power of having previously realized emptiness (with an inferential cognizer).

- Someone says that to such a path of preparation emptiness does not appear clearly because it is a conceptual consciousness. There is a pervasion (i.e. if it is a conceptual consciousness emptiness does necessarily not clearly appear to it) because Dharmakirti says in the

Pramanavartika:

*[To an awareness that] depends on a conceptual consciousness
The meaning does not appear clearly.*

Our response to this is that there is no pervasion (i.e. despite Dharmakirti's quote this does not mean that emptiness does not necessarily not clearly appear to a conceptual consciousness) because the meaning of Dharmakirti's quote is that emptiness does not appear *as clearly* to a conceptual mind apprehending emptiness as it does to a non-conceptual mind apprehending emptiness (although it does clearly appear).

The characteristics of the Mahayana path of preparation

Elaborating on the verses of the **Ornament** that present an extensive description of the characteristics of the *focus* and the *aspect* of the Mahayana path of preparation:

The focus, impermanence and so forth,...

and so forth, Panchen Sonam Drakpa sets forth the following syllogisms:

Regarding the subject, the four noble truths, they are the focus of the heat level of the Mahayana path of preparation because they are the basis of eliminating superimpositions on the heat level of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Regarding the subject, the aspects of the heat level of the Mahayana path of preparation, there are several because there is a small, middling, and great level.

Regarding the subject, the four noble truths, they are the focus of the peak level of the Mahayana path of preparation because they are the basis of eliminating superimpositions on the peak level of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Regarding the subject, the aspects of the peak level of the Mahayana path of preparation, there are several because there is a small, middling, and great level.

Regarding the subject, the four noble truths, they are the focus of the forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation because they are the basis of eliminating superimpositions on the forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Regarding the subject, the aspects of the forbearance level of the Mahayana path of preparation, there are several because there is a small, middling, and great level.

Regarding the subject, the four noble truths, they are the focus of the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation because they are the basis of eliminating superimpositions on the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Regarding the subject, the aspects of the supreme Dharma level of the Mahayana path of preparation, there are several because there is a small, middling, and great level.

- With regard to the aspect of the Mahayana path of preparation, someone cites the following debate: It follows that whatever is the aspect of the Mahayana path of preparation is necessarily a Mahayana path of preparation itself because the aspect of the Mahayana path of preparation has a small, middling, and great level. If one accepts such then it follows that whatever is the aspect of emptiness is necessarily emptiness itself. However, this is unacceptable because the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing is the aspect of emptiness. The uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing is the aspect of emptiness because it is an awareness to which the aspect of emptiness appears.

There is no pervasion i.e. even though the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing is an awareness to which the aspect of emptiness appears this does not mean that such an uninterrupted path is the aspect of emptiness. If there were a pervasion it would absurdly follow that pleasant and unpleasant would not be contradictory. They would not be contradictory because their aspects would not be contradictory. The aspect of pleasant and the aspect of unpleasant would not be contradictory because the awareness to which the aspect of pleasant and the awareness to which the aspect of unpleasant appears are not contradictory. The awareness to which the aspect of pleasant appears and the awareness to which the aspect of unpleasant appears are not contradictory because there is an awareness to which both the aspect of pleasant and the aspect of unpleasant appears.

Our response to this objection is that even though the other verses do not *explicitly* indicate that the focus of the remaining levels are attributes of the four noble truths, they do so *implicitly*. The other verses indicate that the remaining levels are attributes of the four noble truths because they are 'sound expressing the attribute' (Tib.: *chos brjod kyi sgra*) with regard to the four noble truths.

The two lines that present the small heat level of the Mahayana path of preparation, on the other hand, are 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' (Tib.: *chos can brjod pa'i sgra*) with regard to the four noble truths.

The focus of the Mahayana path of preparation

The next section is concerned with the verses of the *Ornament* that present the focus of the eleven levels other than the *small heat* level of the Mahayana path of preparation.

As mentioned above, the two lines that describe the focus of the *small heat* level are 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths and *explicitly* indicate that the focuses of the *small heat* level (i.e. the sixteen aspects) are attributes of the four noble truths. However, the verses that describe the focuses of the remaining eleven levels (*middling heat* level, *great heat* level, *small peak*

level, and so forth) do not *explicitly* indicate that the focus of each of the levels are attributes of the four noble truths, for these verses are not 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to the four noble truth.

Yet, there is no fault because the verses *implicitly* indicate that the focuses of the remaining eleven levels are attributes of the four noble truths by means of being 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths. They implicitly indicate such by means of being 'sound expressing the attribute' because both, 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to the four noble truths indicate the four noble truths, even if the mode of indication may differ.

Therefore, students of the **Ornament** first comprehend in dependence on the first two lines of verse 28 that the focuses of the *small heat* level are attributes of the four noble truths. Thereafter, in dependence on the later verses that describe the focuses of the remaining levels of the Mahayana path of preparation, they understand that these focuses are also attributes of the four noble truths.

- Someone says that the definition of 'sound expressing the attribute' is: an object of hearing causing one to understand the object of expression by way of eliminating other attributes. The definition of 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' is: an object of hearing causing one to understand the object of expression by way of not eliminating other attributes.

These definitions are not correct because 'sound expressing the attribute' and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' are not contradictory while the two definitions are contradictory. 'Sound expressing the attribute' and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' are not contradictory because the statement "impermanent form" is both 'sound expressing the attribute' and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute'. The statement "impermanent form" is 'sound expressing the attribute' because it is 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *impermanent*. It is 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *impermanent* because it is an object of hearing causing an awareness to understand that of the two, attribute and bearer of the attribute, *impermanent* is the attribute.

Also, the statement "impermanent form" is 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' because it is 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *form*. It is 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *form* because it is an object of hearing causing an awareness to understand that form is the basis of the attribute, *impermanent*.

- Someone asserts that 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to a phenomenon and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to the same phenomenon are contradictory.

This is not correct because the statement "a light light" is 'sound expressing the attribute' with regard to *light* and 'sound expressing the bearer of the attribute' with regard to *light*.

The four conceptions

Elaborating on the verses of the **Ornament** that describe the characteristic of the *mode of association*:

Since there are bases and antidotes to those...

and so forth, Panchen Sonam Drakpa presents (1) syllogisms and (2) analysis.

Syllogisms:

Regarding the subject, conceptions of objects of perception, they are categorized into two, because they are categorized into (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception.

Regarding the subject, conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception, they are categorized into nine different conceptions because they are categorized into nine different conceptions from the point of view of their (focal) objects.

Regarding the subject, conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception, they are categorized into nine different conceptions because they are categorized into nine different conceptions from the point of view of their (focal) objects.

Regarding the subject, conceptions of perceivers, they are categorized into two because they are categorized into (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence.

Regarding the subject, conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence, they are categorized into nine different conceptions because they are categorized into nine different conceptions from the point of view of their (focal) objects.

Regarding the subject, conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence, they are categorized into nine different conceptions because they are categorized into nine different conceptions from the point of view of their (focal) objects.

Analysis:

According to our own system, whatever is a conception that is indicated in the *Ornament's* verses on the Mahayana path of preparation is not necessarily one of the two, 'a conception of objects of perception' or 'a conception of perceivers'. It is not necessarily one of the two because the conceptual consciousness that focuses on Hearers' and Solitary Realizers' paths and results, and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of reversal of Bodhisattva paths is neither 'a conception of objects of perception' nor 'a conception of perceivers'.

- Someone asserts that the definition of 'a conception of objects of perception' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on its focal object, objects of perception, and apprehends them to be truly existent. The definition of 'a conception of perceivers' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on its focal object, perceivers, and apprehends them to be truly existent.

These two definitions are not correct because if they were correct it would absurdly follow that the two conceptions (the conception of objects of perception and the conceptions of perceivers) would not be contradictory. They would not be contradictory because the conception that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be truly existent would be both, a conception of objects of perception and a conception of perceivers. It would be both because eye consciousnesses are both objects of perception and perceivers. Therefore, the conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be truly existent would be a conception of objects of perceptions because it accords with the above asserted definition (of a conception of objects of perception). It accords with the above asserted definition because it is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on objects of perception (i.e. eye consciousnesses) and apprehends them to be truly existent. Likewise, the conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be truly existent would be a conception of perceivers because it accords with the above asserted definition (of a conception of perceivers). It accords with the above asserted definition because it is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on perceivers (i.e. eye consciousnesses) and apprehends them to be truly existent.

According to our own system, the definition of conceptions of objects of experience is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on objects of perceivers and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of experience. The definition of conceptions of perceivers is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on perceivers and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.

- Someone holds that these definitions are not correct because if they were correct it would absurdly follow that a conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be both, truly existent objects of experiences and experiencers, would be both, (1) a conception of objects of perception and (2) a conception of objects of perceivers. A conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be both, truly existent objects of experiences and experiencers, would be both, (1) a conception of objects of perception and (2) a conception of objects of perceivers because it is both (1) a conceptual consciousness that focuses on objects of perceivers and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of experience and (2) a conceptual consciousness that focuses on perceivers and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.

According to our own system, a conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be both, truly existent objects of experiences and experiencers, is neither (1) a conception of objects of perception nor (2) a conception of perceivers. It is neither (1) a conception of objects of perception nor (2) a conception of perceivers because it is neither (1) a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly existent objects of experience nor is it (2) a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly existent experiencers. If it were both (1) a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly existent objects of experiences and (2) a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly existent experiencers it would absurdly follow that a conceptual consciousness that focuses on eye consciousnesses and apprehends them to be both truly permanent and impermanent would be a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly impermanent.

However, a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be both truly permanent and impermanent, is not a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly impermanent because it is not an awareness grasping at true existence, whereas a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly impermanent is necessarily an awareness grasping at true existence.

A conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be both truly permanent and impermanent, is not an awareness grasping at true existence because *the lack* of eye consciousnesses being both truly permanent and impermanent is not emptiness. The lack of eye consciousnesses being both truly permanent and impermanent is not emptiness because proponents of the Chittamatra School realize the lack of eye consciousnesses being both truly permanent and impermanent but do not realize emptiness. Proponents of the Chittamatra School do not realize emptiness because they do not assert the lack of true/inherent existence. But proponents of the Chittamatra School realize the lack of an eye consciousness being both truly permanent and impermanent because they realize the lack of eye consciousnesses being both permanent and impermanent.

Please note that eye consciousnesses are impermanent, and not *both* permanent and impermanent. There is nothing that is both permanent and impermanent. Therefore, 'eye consciousnesses being both permanent and impermanent' does not exist which is why 'eye consciousnesses being both permanent and impermanent' cannot serve as the basis of emptiness since the basis of emptiness must be something that exists.

However, a conceptual consciousness that apprehends eye consciousnesses to be truly impermanent is necessarily an awareness grasping at true existence because *the lack* of eye consciousnesses being truly impermanent is emptiness. The lack of eye consciousness being truly impermanent is emptiness because 'eye consciousness being impermanent' exists.

- Someone says that a conceptual awareness that focuses on a conceptual consciousness perceiving vase and apprehends it to be *truly* impermanent is a conceptual awareness that focuses on the conceptual consciousness perceiving vase and apprehends it be impermanent.

This is not correct because whatever is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on a conceptual consciousness perceiving vase and apprehends it to be impermanent is necessarily a correct awareness, whereas whatever is a conceptual awareness that focuses on a conceptual consciousness perceiving vase and apprehends it to be *truly* impermanent is necessarily a wrong consciousness.

- Someone asserts that a conceptual consciousness that focuses on an independent self and apprehends such a self to be a truly existent object of perception is 'a conception of objects of perception'.

It is not correct that a conceptual consciousness that focuses on an independent self and apprehends such a self to be a truly existent object of perception is 'a conception of objects of perception' because a conceptual consciousness that focuses on an independent self and apprehends such a self to be a truly existent object of perception is not an awareness grasping at true existence. It is not an awareness grasping at true existence because an inherently existent self is not an object of perception. An inherently existent self is not an object of perception because it does not exist.

- Someone says that a conceptual consciousness that focuses on vases and apprehends them to be truly existent perceivers is 'a conception of perceivers'.

That is not correct because a conceptual consciousness that focuses on vases and apprehends them to be truly existent perceivers is not an awareness grasping at true existence. It is not an awareness grasping at true existence because vases are not perceivers.

Conceptions of objects of perception can be categorized into (1) conceptions of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception and (2) conceptions of very pure phenomena being objects of perception.

- Someone asserts that the definition of 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on truths of suffering and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception.

According to our own system, this definition is not correct because whatever is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on truths of suffering and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception is not necessarily a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena. For instance, a conceptual consciousness focusing on the faculty of faith that is a truth of suffering and apprehends such faculty to be a truly existent object of perception accords with that definition but is not 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception'. It is not 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' because the faculty faith that is a truth of suffering is not a thoroughly afflicted phenomenon. It is not a thoroughly afflicted phenomenon because it is very pure faculty of faith.

- Someone says that the definition of 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on afflictions and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception.

This is not correct because whatever is 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' does not necessarily accord with the definition. For instance, a conceptual consciousness that focuses on thoroughly afflicted main minds and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception is 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' but not a conceptual consciousness that focuses on afflictions and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception. It is not a conceptual consciousness that focuses on afflictions and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of perception because thoroughly afflicted main minds are not afflictions. Thoroughly afflicted main minds are not afflictions because whatever is an affliction is necessarily a mental factor.

According to our own system, the definition of 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on the factor of thoroughly afflicted phenomena and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of experience.

As mentioned above, 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' can be categorized into nine different types such as a conceptual consciousness that focuses on afflicted ignorance and apprehends it to be a truly existent object of perception.

The definition of 'a conception of thoroughly afflicted phenomena being objects of perception' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on the factor of very pure phenomena and apprehends them to be truly existent objects of experience.

Conceptions of perceivers can be categorized into (1) conceptions of perceivers of substantial existence and (2) conceptions of perceivers of imputed existence.

The definition of 'a conception of perceivers of substantial existence' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on perceivers of substantial existence and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.

The definition of 'a conception of perceivers of imputed existence' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on perceivers of imputed existence and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.

- Someone holds that the definition of 'a conception of perceivers of substantial existence' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses on either substantial existence or on perceivers of substantial existence, and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.
The definition of 'a conception of perceivers of imputed existence' is: a conceptual consciousness that focuses either on imputed existence or on perceivers of imputed existence, and apprehends them to be truly existent experiencers.

These two definitions are not correct because whatever accords with the first definition is not necessarily 'a conception of perceivers of substantial existence' and whatever accords with the second definition is not necessarily 'a conception of imputed existence'. An example of a conception that accords with the first definition but is not 'a conception of perceivers of substantial existence' is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on substantial existence and apprehends it to be a truly existent experiencer. A conceptual consciousness that focuses on substantial existence and apprehends it to be a truly existent experiencer is not a conception of perceivers of substantial existence because substantial existence is not an experiencer.

An example of a conception that accords with the second definition but is not 'a conception of perceivers of imputed existence' is a conceptual consciousness that focuses on imputed existence and apprehends it to be a truly existent experiencer. A conceptual consciousness that focuses on imputed existence and apprehends it to be a truly existent experiencer is not a conception of perceivers of imputed existence because imputed existence is not an experiencer.

Substantial existence and imputed existence are not experiencers because they are not object-possessors (i.e. awarenesses, living beings, or expressive sounds).

Elaborating on the verse of the **Ornament** that presents the characteristic of the *tutor*:

Mind that is undaunted, and so forth,

and so forth, Panchen Sonam Drakpa posits the following syllogisms:

The subject, great compassion in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is a Bodhisattva's inner tutor because it is a clear realization of a Bodhisattva that has neither fallen into the extreme of Samsara nor into the extreme of Peace (i.e. self-liberation).

The subject, a Bodhisattva's empowering condition, a Supreme Emanation Body, is a Bodhisattva's outer tutor because it is a Bodhisattva's empowering condition, a virtuous guide who thoroughly teaches method and wisdom.

Therefore, the definition of an inner tutor is: a clear realization of a Bodhisattva that has neither fallen into the extreme of Samsara nor into the extreme of Peace (i.e. self-liberation).

The definition of an outer tutor is: a Bodhisattva's empowering condition, a virtuous guide who thoroughly teaches a Bodhisattva method and wisdom.

- Someone asserts that the definition of an outer tutor is not correct because a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation may have an outer tutor who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School. A Bodhisattva on the path of preparation may have an outer tutor who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School because he may have a tutor who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School. A Bodhisattva on the path of preparation may have a tutor who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School because he may have a lama who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School.

There is no pervasion, i.e. even though a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation may have a lama who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School this does not mean that he has a tutor who is a proponent of the Chittamatra School. The reason is that whoever is an inner lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an inner tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation. Whoever is an inner lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an inner tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation because whoever is an inner lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an inner tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation, and whoever is an outer

lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an outer tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation.

Whoever is an inner lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an inner tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation because whoever is an inner lama is necessarily a person.

Also, whoever is an outer lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily an outer tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation because whoever is an outer lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily his empowering condition, whereas whoever an outer tutor of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is necessarily his empowering condition.

If the opponent were to object to the statement that whoever is an outer lama of a Bodhisattva on the path of preparation is not necessarily his empowering condition, we would respond: it follows that whoever is an outer lama of a practitioner is necessarily his cause. If the opponent were to accept we would reply: Regarding the subject, Buddha Shakyamuni, it follows that he is the cause of his father King Siddhodana, because he is his father King Siddhodana's outer lama.